

THE LONDON MAGAZINE



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John Lehmann

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BOOKS

With over 14,000 new titles appearing in a year — an average of over 40 every week-day—the spare time reader would be lost in the jungle of literature and near-literature if he did not have a guide.

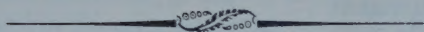
THE DAILY TELEGRAPH's weekly book feature, with reviews by H. D. Ziman, John Betjeman, Peter Green, Kenneth Young and others,

supplies a selection and criticism of current works. Among the writers who have contributed reviews in recent months are Stevie Smith, Margaret Lane, Lord Birkenhead, L. A. G. Strong, E. S. Turner, Anthony Carson, Geoffrey Household and Daniel George. Thus, as in so many other ways, THE DAILY TELEGRAPH caters for people of taste and of discrimination in the good things of life.

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is the paper people trust

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Foreword

The main literary war of the fifties, it seems, will go merrily ahead: I mean the war between—if it is possible under the smoke of battle to distinguish the exact uniforms of the combatants—the journalists and the critics.

In a recent number of *The Spectator* a particularly violent engagement took place. On one page it was possible to find Mr Alan Brien, an ex-Beaverbrook journalist, giving his strong support to *The Angry Decade* (reviewed in this number by Mr Maurice Cranston), a study of certain literary phenomena of the last few years by another ex-Beaverbrook journalist, Mr Kenneth Allsop; and at the bottom of the column a furious verse riposte to Mr Allsop by Mr John Wain, distinguished poet and critic, who considered himself to have been maligned by Mr Allsop. Mr Brien, defending the journalistic approach to modern writers, said, with a most peculiar extravagance, that it was proper to write as if one were meant to be read by 'the winking light of an underground train' because 'contemporary literature should be caught while it is still on the wing and not stuffed under glass in the National Cultural Museum'. As if those were the only alternatives! Mr Wain's view, however, of what Mr Brien romantically calls 'shooting from the hip and in the saddle' was that

'a lout

Can hawk, and gather up his phlegm

And, grinning, spit it in my face.'

The engagement was carried a stage further by Mr Frank Kermode, in his review of John Raymond's collection of essays *England's on the Anvil*,¹ in which the full bitterness of the opposing camps was made even clearer. Mr Kermode, author of an excellent book on the poetic image, was concerned to expose what he believed to be triviality and pretentiousness in Mr Raymond's attitude towards literature (which was, of course, only one of the subjects dealt with by Mr Raymond); but the very thought of *New Statesman* 'middles' seems to have brought a rush of blood to his head, and endeavouring to reach Mr Raymond Mortimer also with a whip brandished against his successor, he declared that the public 'has been laughed out of seeking literary guidance from reviewers to whom the mere notion of providing it is repulsive; and is content instead with regular though various avowals of the reviewer's singular humanity and wit, and with his easy demonstrations of his superiority over those dry,

¹ Collins. 18s.

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HUGH L'ANSON FAWCETT in the *Manchester Guardian*.

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LONGMANS

academic critics who, for all that they have endless leisure and are actually paid to do this work, remain dunces in disguise'.

When one studies these battles a little more closely, it is difficult not to conclude that the violence arises largely from a quite considerable general change that has taken place in the literary world. More and more during the last ten years or so, the kind of serious, if sometimes scrappy reviewing that one used to find in the big circulation newspapers has been giving way to 'feature' stories: if a book (or its author) does not provide an opportunity for a topical or sensational story, it is rarely noticed now in these papers. The journalistic campaign, for instance, that built up the 'angry young men' hulla-baloo, is scarcely conceivable in the conditions that existed before the war. And as the story-seeking journalist has moved in, with the enormous megaphone of television just behind him, another kind of critic has been quietly disappearing, represented neither by Mr Allsop, nor by Mr Raymond and those of his colleagues whose approach shows the magnet-pull of journalism as entertainment, nor by Mr Kermode and the dons and professors he defends with such acerbity. The best literary 'middles' in the weeklies between the wars was written by critics of the standing of Desmond MacCarthy and Virginia Woolf. In reviewing Mrs Woolf's *Granite and Rainbow*, Mr W. W. Robson put his finger on what has been lost when he said: 'Her light, informal prose often carries the findings of quite rigorous detailed analysis. Her manner may be impressionistic, but her matter is the matter of serious criticism.'

It is the weakening of this middle position, of the critic who could be as readable as the popular journalist and yet as intellectually rigorous as the don, that has left the academic critics and the journalist reviewers glaring so savagely at one another across the battle lines. The change has, I think, been damaging to literature, though not yet disastrous. It has meant that certain kinds of books by young authors, which obviously and (as Mr Cranston says) superficially represent the *Zeitgeist* have been boosted and magnified in importance at the expense of other new works which may show both profounder promise and a profounder relation to the *Zeitgeist*. A number of young writers have, in private at least, expressed dismay at this kind of exploitation for its capriciousness and irrelevance. Luckily, all is not lost, because there are still journals where reviewing of the kind for which Mr Robson praises Mrs Woolf can be practised: if there are still critics who believe in it strongly enough and can manage to live in an age of mass entertainment without turning into entertainers.

JOHN LEHMANN

JUNE BOOK SOCIETY CHOICE

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'Mr Swarthout writes narrative like an angel—the attack on Ojos Azules is magnificently done—and in Thorn creates a character of genuine tragic dimensions. The book is harsh, memorable and truly imagined.' DAVID WILLIAMS, *Manchester Guardian*.

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HAROLD M. HARRIS, *Evening Standard*.

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HEINEMANN

Two Poems



I

THE VOICES

The lid flew off, and all the desolations,
As through a roaring poet's shameless throat,
Poured out their lamentations.
It seemed somewhere they were trying to take a vote
That in the hurry and din was never taken,
For not one wrong was shaken.
And all as stupid and sad
As a cashiered and spavined army of horse
Charging behind their false archaic neigh
At a fantastical force
Then thousand miles or years away;
Or as a tribe who having lost their tongue
Could find no articulate word to say,
Having forgotten what was fresh and young:
All so debased by time it was almost mad.

We were assembled for some ceremony,
Compelled to this music, forced to hear.
But as we listened insidious memory,
The secret spy within the ear,
Whispered, 'This is your speech, this is the rune
You never read; this is your oldest tune.'
At which we cried, 'Push, push it back under the ground.
We will not listen. We
Will not endure that sound,'
And in the clamour could not hear a voice
That calmly said, 'Rejoice.'

II

IMPERSONAL CALAMITY

Respectable men have witnessed terrible things,
And rich and poor things extraordinary,
These murder-haunted years. Even so, even so,
Respectable men seem still respectable,
The ordinary no less ordinary,
For our inherited features cannot show
More than traditional grief and happiness
That rise from old and worn and simple springs.
How can an eye or brow
Disclose the gutted towns and the millions dead?
They have too slight an artistry.
Between us and the things that change us
A covenant long ago was set
And is prescriptive yet.
A single grief from man or God
Freely will let
Change in and bring a stern relief.
A son or daughter dead
Can bend the back or whiten the head,
Break and remould the heart,
Stiffen the face into a mask of grief.
It is an ancient art.
The impersonal calamities estrange us
From our own selves, send us abroad
In desolate thoughtlessness,
While far behind our hearts know what they know,
Yet cannot feel, nor ever express.

HENRI THOMAS

The Father Everlasting

Translated from the French by Jean Stewart



My brother is sixty-three years old. Actually he's my half-brother; we are sons of the same mother, he by a first marriage and I by her second, with twenty years between us. He had begun to study Latin at school and had got as far as the Fifth form, and then I don't know what happened, but the fact is that since 1910 he has always worked with my father, who already kept the same grocer's shop that he has now. My brother still says that he never wanted to be a grocer, but ever since 1910 he's been working with my father. He's a widower, his wife died after going out of her mind. I saw her at the height of her madness, but he never did. (I was just a kid of twelve or thirteen, and I used to be sent to *look after Auntie*.) I don't think he was very brave by nature, and his wife's illness turned him into a confirmed coward; he only feels safe when leading a completely routine existence. That was why he lived in peace as long as Father was in good health; the grocery business belonged to Father and my brother hadn't to take any initiative. But when Father was taken to hospital at the age of eighty-three, my brother was forced to look after the business as though it were his sole responsibility, and the result was that things which he used to do mechanically, jobs which were quite familiar to him, became terrifying overnight; he started worrying about them and his one idea was to reduce his responsibilities. His favourite expression suddenly became: 'cutting down'. He would say: 'I'm going to cut down the rounds.' Instead of visiting three villages with his grocery van, he proposed to call only at the nearest of the three. And whereas Father had travelled round the neighbourhood on business for over thirty years and had built up a substantial custom, my brother wanted to confine himself to the shop; and since the latter was already finding difficulty in holding its own against more enterprising firms, my brother's attitude nearly proved fatal to it. He's quite right to say that he ought never to have been a grocer,

it's much too adventurous a profession. And yet he has a grocer's reactions in the most unexpected circumstances. Father, after he fell ill, used to think of nothing but food, and naturally he was never satisfied with what they gave him in hospital. When I got down there, I went to visit him with my brother; he said: 'Oh, so there you are—' and then I think he simply stopped seeing me; he spoke only to my brother, telling him: 'Bring me some sponge fingers and a bottle of Arbois.' Then my brother pulled his order-book out of his waistcoat pocket, and his ball-point pencil, and I heard him say: 'Sponge fingers, one box, Arbois, one bottle. . . .' When I left, he went with me to the station, and on the platform, while we waited for the train, he pulled out the same notebook and the same ball-point pencil: 'I'm taking advantage of your being here to consult you about drawing up the funeral notice—you never know, do you?' Right until the train came in I had to give him advice on whether Cousin So and so should be put before Uncle So and so, whether all the decorations and honours should be mentioned—President of the United Bowls Players of the Jura, etc. He went on asking me questions through the window after I'd got into the train; believe me, I heaved a sigh of relief when I felt the train starting to move.

A fortnight later, Father had an operation for prostate, and now he's home again; at eighty-three he's started life afresh. My brother must have recovered all his peace of mind; at least I imagine so, for I shan't hear about it from himself. I think, at heart, he bears me a grudge for not having reassured him; indeed, I'd advised him to prepare for the worst, partly from exasperation, and in order to watch him panic. But if he had a grudge against me, he must be all the more pleased now, for he's had his revenge. When he told me: 'Your father's tough, he'll pull through, he still enjoys a drink, etc,' of course I looked askance at him; what did he know about my father's state of health? He was scared, and he was trying to ward off danger, that's all. He saw that I was quite unmoved, and from that the poor fool drew the conclusion that I bore him ill-will. Except on account of his stupidity, I can't think why I should do so, but the fact is that I invariably contradict him, and in small-town society, pessimism about invalids is often a form of malice, a sort of muffled curse, something ever so slightly diabolical. There are still salamanders and witches in the Jura!

He must be feeling triumphant now, all along the line indeed. For of course I contradicted him on more than one point. His happiest moment must be when he creeps into bed, for then he sees the typewriter on his bedside table. It's been there for five years now, it's as much part of the bedside table as is the chamberpot

enshrined beneath it. The case of the typewriter happened to measure exactly the same as the table-top; for the past five years the things that would otherwise have stood on the marble slab now rest on the lid of the case—a glass for my brother's dentures at night, his spectacles, something to read: Vermot's Almanach or the *Chasseur Français*—but they're all set out on a traycloth a little wider than the lid, hanging festooned over the sides half-way down the case. When my brother said to me three years ago: 'Come and look'—but I must first explain that he had won forty thousand francs a few months earlier with his share of a winning ticket in the National Lottery. It was with this money that he had bought the typewriter, as anybody else might have bought a jewel or a work of art, not for its usefulness but in order to convert the money into something precious whose value was likely to increase with time. He explained all this to me, almost passionately! I burst out laughing: 'In a year's time your typewriter will probably have lost half its value, at the present rate of technical progress; they're making electric ones already.' That was when he told me: 'Come and look.'

I've seen a fair number of typewriters, but never one that looked like that; it's true that it was rather dark in his room and that he didn't leave me time to examine it closely; he lifted the lid, and at that point I must have sniggered, for he was furious: 'All right, we'll say no more about it!' and he slammed the lid and locked it. From what I could see of the keyboard, they must have sold him something very unusual in our part of the world but devoid of any other value—possibly a machine with Chinese or Hebrew or Russian characters. . . . I tried at least to make him tell me the make of it; he replied with impressive composure: 'I told you, we'll say nothing more about it.'

All this was three years ago; ever since then the typewriter has remained on the bedside table; on my last visit I peeped into the room, nothing had changed at all: the traycloth was there, the glass for his teeth, the *Chasseur Français*, and now that Father is out of hospital and has come back to the next room, you'd really believe that nothing had happened at all. There's just one thing, but it only enhances my brother's triumph: each year at Easter, for the past ten years, I've gone down there, but this year I stayed in Paris. The reason, obviously, was that I'd already gone to Salins earlier in the year, in February, when Father was ill. A fortnight before Easter my brother sent me a postcard: 'Your father's quite well, but he's never satisfied, he's unbearable.' If he had asked me what I intended to do at Easter I'd have told him in black and white my excellent reason for not coming; I ought perhaps to have done so

without bothering about his card; the fact is, the way his mind works, he considers my annual trip to Salins as something quite independent of anything else that happens throughout the year; my visit is part of his own personal habits, or rather of his bondage, for he's never pleased to see me, yet I'm there every year at Easter—at least I used to be—and he was bound to let me into the house: it's my home. Actually, I believe my Easter visit has always been a sort of annual confirmation of his inferior, precarious position, of all the things he forgets the rest of the time. I used to turn up from Paris, I was in my own home; whether I spoke or not, I always seemed to be making fun of him, and I was the one, don't forget, who had looked after Auntie. My half-brother is not devoid of logic, indeed in one sense he's all logic and nothing else: everything has to be entirely consistent for him. Last year, while Father was ill, he saw threats on every side, circumstances seemed to have combined into a single block hanging over him to crush him—today he thinks, presumably, that the rock has fallen over another way—on to myself, who never write, who didn't stir at Easter, who maybe have ceased to exist.

He's got Father and he's got the typewriter, his mind's at peace; there's something about Father which must impress him in the same way as the typewriter: some strong, inscrutable interior mechanism. He cannot make use of Father, any more than of the typewriter; indeed he finds Father unbearable, but the important thing is that he's there. A kind of Father Everlasting, and if I were to tell my half-brother that he's an Old Testament man, stubbornly blind to prophesies of the Coming, that his present sense of security is due to his belief in the Eternal and his unawareness of the Messiah—but I've no intention of making that sort of remark to him. It behoves the Son to wait in silence, growing in strength and in wisdom, and as the Son is with the Father, I wish the typewriter might be made of gold and that my Father might bury us all, amen!

TED HUGHES

Two Poems

GROOM'S DREAM

We were born grooms, in stable-straw we sleep still,
All our wealth horse-dung and the combings of horses,
And all we can talk about is what horses ail.

Out of the night that gulfed beyond the palace-gate
There shook hooves and hooves and hooves of horses:
Our horses battered their stalls, their eyes jerked white,

And we ran out, mice in our pockets, straw in our hair,
Into a darkness ruining and deafening to horses
And a quake of hooves. Our lantern's little orange flare

Made a round mask of our each sleep-staring face
Bodiless, or else bodied by enraged horses
That whinnied and bit and cannoned the world from its place.

The tall palace was so white, the moon was so round,
Everything else a plunging blackness of horses
To the rim of our eyes that strove for the shapes of the sound.

We crouched at our lanterns, our bodies drank the din,
And we longed for a death trampled by such horses
As every grain of the earth had hooves and mane.

We must have fallen like drunkards into a dream
Of listening to horses, lulled by the thunder of the horses:
We awoke, stiff: broad day had come.

Out through the gate the unprinted desert stretched
To stone and scorpion: our stable horses
Lay in their straw, in a hag-sweat, listless and wretched.

Envoi

Let me, tied, be torn to quarters by these poor horses,
If but doomsday's flames be great horses,
The forever itself a circling of the hooves of horses.

CONSTANCY

The rivers are flowing, the air moving,
The landmark mountains are lasting: this persisting
Pig-headedness of the earth is not resisting
Time, but a rider astride it arriving.

The cloud of the mind climbs, declines,
The flowing of rivers a stay to its going,
The caress and press of the air sole knowing
Of its own being, and the mountain stones

Buttress awhile the cloud of the mind
As it leans to them. Braced against object
Body claims permanence like a muscle locked,
Never doubts that grip on ground;

But the mind's cloud is a coming and going
Of airs and dews that shape it and colour
And dusts floating, and for all its mountain pillow
Cannot affirm hardier being.

On every instant the earth arrives . . .
Wide the feet brace, strong, as the hands
Haul against that massive careerer, but the mind's
Clouds are under its hooves.

Out by the Country Club

On a Friday afternoon in late June the note came. Johnny O'Harrity Amster was playing on the front side lawn, which was yellowy and poor from his playing there and quite unlike the rest of the three acres of soft summer grass. He was lining up his army of several hundred lead soldiers for parade.

The note, wrapped and tied around a medium-sized rock, hit the portico like a bomb. As soon as it hit, his heart beat faster. His small dirty pink fingers began to fly like hoppers over the yellow grass and his legs. He never used to act like this, but then ever since last Christmas everything about him had been changing. It made it twice as bad for the note to come while he was playing soldiers, with a Queen Elizabeth for general . . . a lead parachutist painted purple with water colour . . . walking around inside a palace fence of matchsticks. His parents said he was too big for playing soldiers, at least the way he played with a Queen and a cigar-box palace and a royal garden of single verbena blossoms. He ought to have been playing catch or throwing darts at the Chinaberry tree. Johnny didn't know whether to keep on playing or whether to run and get the note at once. He wiped his mouth, which was still over-pink from cherry drops, on the sleeve of his shirt. He turned around to see if Jake, the yardman, had noticed. No, Jake had not seen the rock hit and he was not watching Johnny. But Jake, running the gasoline mower, was not more than twenty feet away from his kingdom. Johnny had been so busy playing that he was quite unaware how close the mower was.

He wiped his eyes, which burned from trying to keep from crying, and when he looked at his soldiers and his palace, it was like looking in a clouded mirror. His mouth was drawing together like after eating a green persimmon. He wondered if he would be able to walk. He had seen men in movies who got so scared they couldn't move.

Johnny knew who the note was from. It was from Billy Hough-

ton, who was one year older and who was even more changed than he was; who smoked behind Cape jasmines and arborvitae; who, Johnny secretly thought, was the handsomest boy he knew. Before ever seeing the note Johnny knew what the note would say, at least he knew that it would state the place and the time when they would meet to fight; to fight, Johnny thought, for no good reason at all; to fight just simply because Billy Houghton believed that a fight between them was necessary. He was always extra-nice to Billy Houghton. Hadn't he given him a dollar bill and his new baseball, and wouldn't he rather go to the movies with Billy Houghton than with anyone else he knew?

In all his life Johnny, who was thirteen, had never had a fight. Fighting, like football and girls and shaving, was something he would do when he was grown. It would happen, he thought, like finally jumping off the ten-foot diving board at the country club pool. He would be suddenly grown with muscles and whiskers and look like a cross between his father and those men in the movies, wearing tight trousers and fighting with swords. But he really couldn't think about it now. There were all the things he loved to do when he was twelve, together with so many new things he had begun to notice and to worry about. There was his secret: the horrible changing of his body and his voice.

Johnny got up from his place in the yellow grass and ran to the portico. The rock with the note wrapped around it was lying directly beneath the brass mailbox which was as shiny as a gold golf cup. He took away the dirty string, and when he had the note he let the rock fall on the red stone floor. 'At seven o'clock. The Doriot lot. It will be a fair fight.' At first Johnny didn't know if it meant that he would meet Billy alone, and then maybe he could give him another dollar and talk him out of it; or whether there would be Billy's friends at the lot, boys who were even older than Billy, who carried tiny books in their back pockets with vulgar pictures which simply couldn't be true. But Billy was no larger than he was, so he supposed that that was what a fair fight meant.

He crumpled the note in his pocket, and he rang the bell. Chimes sounded. Julia was a long time coming, and before she came he had slapped one of the clean white columns, making a dirty, nasty print. As she was opening the door, he was wiping it with his handkerchief, which his mother told him to always carry because you never knew when you would need one.

'Now what's that you've done?' asked Julia.

He didn't answer her.

'Well, just wait till your mother sees that,' she said.

'She won't see it,' said Johnny smartly. 'She'll come in by the side entrance.'

'My, you're filthy. Did you pick up all those soldiers? You know what your mother'll say if she sees you've been playing like that again.'

He didn't answer Julia this time either. Sometimes Julia was nice and on his side, but sometimes she was just like all the others, picking on him.

'Well, Jake'll pick them up,' she said. 'You'd better go on upstairs and take your bath. Your mother'll be home at five, and you know how she likes to find you all clean and dressed.' Julia didn't say when his father would be home, although she liked him much better. It was his mother who fussed when he wasn't clean.

Julia, a short, plump woman with hair the colour of orange popsicles, had been first his nurse and then, when he was too old for a nurse, she had stayed on as housekeeper and maid. It was Julia who stayed with him when his parents went to the LSU games in Baton Rouge and to the Gulf Coast for weekends. Julia had white, white skin, powdered like the top of a sponge cake, and on her cheeks were two red dots of rouge like the sunsets on penny post cards. She was wearing her rimless glasses, and Johnny knew that she had been reading movie magazines and not doing any work. Julia never wore her glasses to work around the house.

She patted his shoulder as he passed her by, and she tried to smooth down his hair. He walked on past her. He realized how wonderfully cool it was inside his house. Because of the New Orleans heat the house was air-conditioned. That's why the windows and doors were kept closed and shut, like people being away the whole year round on a long summer trip. The coolness inside the smooth plastered walls seemed almost like the coolness of the Orpheum Palace.

As he walked not a sound, except a swish-puff, came from his dirty white sandals. The hall, like every other room in the house but the playroom with its rows of silver skeet cups, golf cups and football trophies, was covered with thick pale carpet, carpet that was still spanking clean. In Billy Houghton's house your feet made a racket when you just crossed the floor to pick up a tennis ball, and if you got mad and stomped your foot, it sounded like the war in Paramount News. But this house, called modern colonial by his mother, didn't make a sound. Only voices made sounds; only voices and slaps.

It was a nice house. It had four tall white columns in the front and brick walls painted so white every two years that it hurt your eyes

to look at them in the sun. And inside the Venetian blinds matched the colours of the walls . . . pink, pale green, pale blue, pink. His mother said that his grandfather O'Harrity, now dead but who had once owned the O'Harrity Shipping, Inc, had given them the house, given it as a present to her, to his father and to Johnny himself. But when his mother got mad she said it was her house and everything in it except those cups and trophies in the game room was hers. It was a nice house, anyway, no matter who it belonged to.

He went into the dining-room as if he were looking for something. The dining-room had a bay window with a plant stand. It had a crystal chandelier over a shiny Duncan Phyfe table, and a silver service on a sideboard with knife boxes at each end. A year ago he had looked in those boxes for knives but they were perfectly empty and useless.

'Why don't you go on upstairs like a good boy? What are you looking for, Johnny?'

He wished there were knives in those boxes. He wished that he could murder Billy Houghton and everybody else who hated him and who said he was changing. He wished he could do anything he wanted and never get caught. As he looked at those empty boxes he was sorry that there wasn't a knife there with which he could scrape himself, scrape away all those horrible changes that took place while he slept, making him feel that he was turning into a pimply lizard, popping out all over with bubbles and boils.

By this time Julia had caught up with him. He felt her soft fingers smoothing down his fine blond hair.

'I say, what're you looking for, Johnny? Is something the matter with you?'

He wanted to ask her how she could tell that something was the matter, but he said instead: 'Could you get me a coke, Julia? I would love a coke in a glass of ice.' He told her this so that she would take her hands off him. Last Christmas morning, when he was thirteen, he first began to hate Julia touching him. He started locking the door when he took a bath and locking the door when he dressed.

'Now you know, Johnny, too many cokes are bad for you.'

'Please, please, Julia,' he put his arm around her soft waist. She kissed his forehead several times, then lay her cheek with its sunset on top of his head. Her arm went around his shoulders.

'You're still my baby boy, aren't you, honey?'

'Sure I am, Julia,' he said. Sure enough, Julia went off to the kitchen. He heard her tell the cook who was coloured to fix Master Johnny a coke.

Johnny wandered from the dining-room into the big living-room

that was all dim and still with the blinds shut tight. Nobody ever sat in there. There were crystal sidelights and frail chairs covered in pink and green. The marble mantel still had that hole which he shot with his BB gun last year.

When he had sat down in one of the frail chairs, hoping that his dirt wouldn't come off on it, Julia called, 'Where are you, Johnny?' and he answered, 'In here.' He said, 'Thanks, Julia,' taking the coke, and she stood behind the chair, running her fingers through his hair. He wished that Julia would leave him alone so that he could decide what to do.

'There's Lana Turner playing at the Orpheum this evening. Would you like to go with me, Johnny?'

'Naw, I don't want to go this evening.'

'Well, you don't have to go and get ugly with your Julia who loves you better than anyone in the world.'

'I don't want to go this evening.'

Surely Julia would take her hands away now.

'You're awfully cross, Johnnyboy. Your father is never cross like that.' She was twisting a lock of his hair into a curl.

He got up and walked to the window. He raised one of the pale green slats and looked out. Jake, who had arthritis, was picking up his soldiers. He felt sick inside, and he didn't know why. When he said, 'I know my father gets nasty. I heard him that Saturday,' it was like saying he didn't like chocolate cake any more when he liked it better than anything. It was that note, he told himself. It was that fight with Billy Houghton on his mind. Nothing was changing, nothing was gone.

'You shouldn't talk that way about your father,' Julia said. 'You ought to forget that Saturday.' And then the telephone rang and Julia went off to answer it without ever giving him the chance to explain that he still loved his father better than anyone else. He didn't want Julia to think that he had changed toward his father too.

The bathroom door was locked. He was scrubbing himself hard, extra hard, in a tub full of tepid grey water. It seemed that he was getting dirt off his body, dirt from days and months. He cleaned behind his ears and he washed his navel and under his arms. He wanted to get himself perfectly clean like he used to be when he was twelve.

Until he heard the car drive in the driveway below, he did not even think about the fight. But as soon as he heard the car pull to a stop, honk for packages to be taken out, he slumped down in the tub. His forehead rippled with a frown, and he had to take two deep breaths before he felt that he was breathing. The car belonged to his

mother, home at five o'clock from her afternoon game of bridge.

He knew what she was doing because he had seen her come home dozens of times from afternoons of bridge, afternoons of golf at the country club. She was coming in by the side door and she was asking Julia if there had been any telephone calls. Julia was showing her the blue pad with the callers' names and numbers. Right away his mother was going to the telephone table under the stairway and she was sitting down on the white leather bench, and Julia was bringing her a coke with ice. His mother was trying to light a cigarette and talk into the receiver at the same time. He wondered if Mrs Houghton had called her.

His mother, Betty O'Harrity Amster, was five foot three, and people said she looked like a doll. But as long as Johnny could remember, she had had a thin sharp face like a schoolteacher who saw everything, and hair that was perfectly straight when she went too long without a permanent. His mother was always reducing.

For weeks at a time she had Melba toast and tea without cream on a pink breakfast tray, and she used the rowing machine kept under her new four-poster bed for half an hour before her bath. In the afternoons she played golf and tennis three times a week in between her afternoons of bridge. But after paying so much attention to diets and exercising, she would wake up on a certain morning and tell Julia to have the cook prepare hot biscuits and sausages and peaches with cream. It was the same way that she made Johnny go to Sunday school when he would much rather have played with his soldiers or dug a tunnel, and then one morning she would forget about Sunday school and he would play as far away from the house as possible until it was eleven o'clock. When she caught Johnny telling stories, she cut off his allowance for a week. But sometimes he could get away with saying the most outrageous things, like making nine home runs, or saying that Julia had burned the hole in his blue flannel jacket, when it was he himself who burned the hole, smoking with Billy Houghton and Billy Houghton's friends. Any fool ought to have caught on to these stories, but there were times when his mother let them pass . . . times she spent whole days reading magazines on the satin chaise lounge from D. H. Holmes, and talked about *her* house and *her* air-conditioning and *her* father's money. There were days when she would call his father at the office and say, 'Please be home at four-thirty, there is an important party at the shipping office,' just not paying any attention to his father's job.

In spite of these times when nothing seemed to work out in his mother's life, Johnny was beginning to feel that it was she who

decided what was to be done in the end. It was she who made him feel that he was a weakling and a storyteller; who first saw the pimples and laughed mysteriously; who, if he told her about the note, would say, 'I told you not to see Billy Houghton in the first place.'

She might even telephone Billy's mother, and Billy would lie in wait for him, and all of the other boys would mark up the Amsters' sidewalks with yellow chalk and yellow paint. That was how boys acted out by the country club, that was how boys, he supposed, acted everywhere.

Johnny would have liked to tell his mother about the note, because it was wonderful to tell her serious things. She made quick decisions and she picked up the telephone receiver and got things done. But his mother had her ways of killing you. Johnny remembered what she said that Saturday to his father.

When he got out of the tub, it was five twenty-five. He dried himself with a pale green towel marked B. O'H. A. and he picked up a pair of white duck trousers. He was going to put them on, when he heard another car drive in. It was his father's Buick. He knew how the motor sounded. Johnny picked up the soiled pair of khakis that he had worn to play in. It would be better wearing these when he showed his father the note.

(Why aren't you dressed, Johnnyboy?)

(I'm going to beat the daylights out of Billy Houghton.)

(Here, here, old man. Let's talk this over.)

When he opened the bathroom door he heard his father and mother in the downstairs hall.

'Hello, darling, did you have a good day at the office?'

'I don't know. Not bad, not good. I'm just not cut out to be a broker.'

'Don't be silly, darling. You're just tired. Let's have a drink together in the game room.'

His mother was being extra-nice today. Perhaps his father was tired. He sometimes talked that way when he was tired.

Johnny left the white duck trousers on the bathroom floor. He went into his room, which had twin beds of cherry wood and a framed set of those British guardsmen in dress uniforms that his father had got for him by sending in so many whisky labels with a dime. He liked these pictures all right, but he had some far prettier pictures of ladies in hoop skirts and men in lace, kept under the shirts in his bureau. Julia said his father knew about these others and that was why he had gotten those pictures. But he couldn't worry about that now with this fight on his mind. It was five fifty-

five now. Johnny fell across his bed. He didn't dare talk to his father while his mother was down there.

(Daddy, Billy Houghton wants to fight with me. I don't want to have to beat the daylights out of him . . . but . . . but he started it.)

Johnny was certain, practically certain, that his father would believe him. When there was company for cocktails or company for supper, Johnny would come in and say hello to the guests. As soon as he would leave, he could hear his father telling the most wonderful stories about him. 'He may look a puny fellow but he's tough as hell . . . hits three out of three clay pigeons now . . . pretty good in the outfield . . . tough as hell, my Johnny. Stand up to anybody.' Johnny kicked his feet on the white counterpane and made two more spots. He felt his cheeks grow hot, and he lay there stretched out on the counterpane, his small fist clutching a bit of the white chintz with laurel leaves. He couldn't hear the voices now, but they were still down there drinking. It was nearly six o'clock, and soon it would be seven.

(Now I can't have you jumping on Billy Houghton. The Houghtons are friends of ours. Here's two dollars, Johnnyboy. Let's call up Billy, and you go to the movies.)

His father, Jimmy Amster, came from a much quieter family than the O'Harritys. They hadn't had enough money to send Jimmy Amster to Tulane, but Jimmy went. He played football for four years, was the best quarter-back Tulane ever had. During his senior years he was elected president of his class, was voted the young man most likely to succeed. Johnny had seen the pictures in the Tulane album in the game room.

A long time ago his father's family had a sugar plantation, but as far back as Johnny could remember, the Amster aunts had taught school and the uncles were tellers in banks. One uncle was a post-master over in Lake Charles. He had seen them all when they came for Sunday dinners twice a year. His father was by far the best-looking and had surely succeeded as people said he would. He had been a food broker, a vice-president of the shipping line, and was now in stocks. His father was the only Amster who had a Buick and a motorboat and a brand-new air-conditioned house.

His father was tall and thickly handsome. His face seemed always blistered by the sun. On weekdays he wore tan slacks and short-sleeved polo shirts, and he was forever holding a highball glass. In the mornings his father coughed a lot, and his mother, looking at him in his shorts and socks and garters, would say, 'I thought you gave up smoking.' And his father would not even bother to answer her, just as Johnny wouldn't bother to answer his Julia. For weeks

at a time his father went on duck hunts. In the game room there were stuffed ducks on placards and a wildcat (under the glass-topped table) and a great shark over the mantel, where all the cups were lined up.

Jimmy Amster, thought Johnny, was just about the perfect father. None of the other boys he knew had a father who had been a quarter-back, a young man most likely to succeed, and who was still considered, according to Julia, the very handsomest man in New Orleans. Didn't Billy Houghton's mother, who had to work downtown, who was married to an Abraham Lincoln-looking lawyer, get drunk at a dinner party at their house and throw her arms around his father? And weren't the women friends of Johnny's mother always dropping by for drinks whether his mother was at home or not? Johnny remembered the time his mother threw her arms around his father's neck, kissed him and called him God's gift to women.

Now the Amsters were always invited to lots and lots of parties, and while his father was dressing in the bedroom adjoining his mother's room, Johnny would go in there and talk to him. He would watch his father move around with just his undershorts on and black silk socks held up by white garters and black patent-leather shoes. His father had strong, heavy legs with muscles that seemed to charge whenever he moved them, and Johnny, who was slight and blond and always being teased for his smallness, wanted more than anything in the world to look like his father some day.

He loved to watch his father put real diamonds and real emeralds into his stiff shirt for buttons, diamonds that were presents from his wife. His father also had two gold cigarette cases and five pairs of pearl and platinum-and-gold cuff links, all presents. And when his father rubbed sweet-smelling lotions and talcum powder on his red face, he would dab some of it on Johnny's face, telling him, 'You'll be shaving in a few years, Johnnyboy, you'll be a man not long from now.' He hated to think of horrible hairs growing all over his face but he wouldn't let his father know this, and he would ask: 'And will I be given diamond buttons too, Daddy, and emeralds?' His father would give him a glance from the corner of his eye. It was one of those so-that's-it glances that men in the movies give. Johnny had never understood why his father became so silent.

While his father was dressing there was always a whisky and soda on the corner of the dresser, which had dozens of white rings on its top. His father would take a sip from the glass while he was in the middle of dressing. At this time of day his eyes would be opening and shutting many times, but Johnny learned his lesson

for asking his father if it was because of whisky that he was so sleepy. He learned that lesson on the very same day when he asked his father what the blue vein stood for, that blue vein by one of his eyebrows.

While he was talking to his father, his mother, dressed in a long black dress with a string of pearls, would come into the room saying, 'Aren't you dressed yet?' And without even asking his father she would take away the whisky and soda, pour it down the lavatory. 'How many is that before dinner?' His father wouldn't bother to answer his mother, who would give him one of her sharp school-teacher glances. 'I don't see why you insist on ruining every single evening.' Once she added, 'And I might as well tell you, Jimmy Amster, that people will stand so much. No wonder you can't make a go of things.'

'Don't talk that way in front of Johnny.'

'He might as well know. It's time, I think.'

'You run along, Johnnyboy. Come, give your daddy a big kiss.' Sometimes his father's eyes would get so red and watery that Johnny wondered if he had been crying.

Above everything else Johnny remembered that Saturday afternoon when his father came home all sleepy from the country club. His mother opened the door for him. Johnny was standing in the back of the hall by the telephone.

'Just where on earth have you been? I've been waiting here two solid hours for you. We're so late the Browns will be perfectly furious.'

'I played a round of golf with Brad Taylor. It . . . it got so hot that we had a few drinks and. . . .'

'I'm getting sick and tired of this kind of behaviour.' As soon as his mother raised her voice, Johnny backed into the living-room out of sight. He knew that that would make his father feel better.

'If I'd any sense I'd have put a stop to this years ago. I don't know what we would do if I didn't get a big fat check from Papa's estate twice a month. Don't you have any pride, Jimmy Amster? What do you think my mother thinks, or my brother?'

'I try to make you a good living. I. . . .'

'Just how far do you think your salary would get us? Why, we couldn't even send Johnny to college on what you make.'

'Johnny could get to college. He could play football like I did. Johnny's got guts.'

'A lot of good your guts would have done without my money.'

Johnny heard a blow, a hard slap, his mother's cry. He heard her running up the stair carpet and then he heard the front door

open. His father must have stood for several minutes in the hall with the door open because Johnny heard the noises of the road, horns blowing and fast cars whizzing by with radios playing, a five-o'clock whistle. His father went out and slammed the door. His Buick backed down the long concrete drive and sped down the asphalt road.

In a few minutes his mother came downstairs. Johnny kept close to the pale green wall in the living-room. She must have stood there in the hall, lighting a cigarette, where his father had stood, and then she went to the telephone and started calling the country club, Grandma Amster's, the Boston Club, the Houghtons'. . . all of the places where his father might be. She telephoned her brother and told him that she had quarrelled with Jimmy quite horribly, that it was all her fault. 'For Lord's sake' she said, 'give Jimmy all of the bond business you can. It's his pride,' she said, 'his God-damned pride.'

For nearly a week his father stayed away. Johnny's mother said that he had gone on a duck-shoot, but his mother ought to have known that ducks were out of season. In the end everything turned out all right. His father came back, and they went to Nassau for three weeks, just his father and mother, like having a honeymoon. While they were gone, he and Julia went to the movies every single day, sometimes they saw the same movie twice and three times, and Julia gave Johnny as many cokes, as many butter-fingers and pralines as he liked. Johnny found six more pictures of ladies in hoop skirts carrying fans, and Julia didn't say one nasty word about his playing with the pictures. It was like Christmas and birthdays rolled in one, with both his parents gone. When his parents returned they started going to parties again, and Johnny went in to talk to his father while he dressed. There were several dozen new white rings made on the top of the dresser, and they were beginning to appear like ringworms on the bedside table. His mother told Johnny, when she got back from Nassau, that he must be extra-nice to his father, who provided so many nice things for them. 'Your father has his faults, Johnny, but you can always count on him to do the right thing.'

(Now a fight is no way to settle a quarrel, Johnnyboy. You and Billy Houghton ought to settle this quietly.)

It was Julia who discovered him stretched across the bed. She was standing in the doorway holding the two heavy baskets of his lead soldiers.

'Tell Julia what's the matter, honey.'

'Nothing's the matter,' he said quite crossly. He had raised himself

to look at her. He hoped that his ears weren't red.

'Why haven't you had your bath?'

'I *did* take my bath.'

'Then why haven't you dressed in your clean clothes. You know how your mother likes you clean in the evenings.'

'Don't bother me, Julia.'

'Is that the way to thank me for toting up all these soldiers that weigh a ton?'

She came into the room. She set down the baskets and kept her lips tightly together. Johnny ran to Julia, putting his arms around her waist.

'Now, now, honey child, now, now.'

It made him feel good being nice to Julia, because when you were in trouble everything depended on everything else.

He heard his mother's soft walk in the upstairs hall. Julia left his room and went into the bathroom to pick up his towel and wash out the tub. She always started busying herself when his mother came. Johnny went out in the upstairs hall.

'Hi, stranger. Don't I get a kiss?'

He kissed his mother's cheek. She smelled of perfume and cigarette smoke and whisky. She had on a pale blue linen suit and a blue ribbon in her hair, and she was swinging a pair of sun glasses.

'Are you going to a party tonight?' he asked.

'The Leonards are having us over to cook a steak. Why do you suddenly ask about a party?'

'I just wondered what you were doing.'

'Do you want to go to a movie with Julia?'

'No, I don't believe I do.'

As he started to go downstairs, he heard her call for Julia to lay out her red linen dress, and Julia came swishing from the bathroom. 'Oh, you do look so fine and lovely in that red dress.'

His shoes hardly made a sound on the thick grey carpet on the stairs. He came upon his father in the hall, taking a last drink from his glass. His mother hadn't noticed he was in his dirty clothes. He wondered what his father would say.

'Hello, daddy.'

'Well, well. What's my Johnnyboy been doing all day?' His father put his glass on the console, and Johnny went to him. He stiffened his arms for his father to lift him into the air, as he always did, but his father just kissed his forehead. It was then that he decided to tell the truth.

'Billy Houghton and I had a fuss, Daddy.'

'Well, all boys get mad at each other.' His father started towards

the kitchen. Johnny followed him and stood by the white enamel table while his father mixed himself another drink.

'You don't understand, Daddy. Billy Houghton wants to fight me, and he's older than I am.'

With his drink in his hand, his father turned to look at him. He seemed to be getting more serious now.

'When did all this happen?'

'I was playing soldiers on the front lawn, not with kings and queens at all, when a note came wrapped around a great big rock. It nearly hit me on the head.'

'Where is the note?'

'I . . . I . . . ' He was going to say that he didn't know where but his hand went automatically into his pocket, bringing out the piece of crumpled paper.

His father put down his drink and frowned his forehead to read the note.

'Is it tonight he wants to fight you?'

'He beat Sammy Myers up last week and Sammy's nose bled for a whole night and one of his teeth got cracked. Sammy's mouth was just swimming with blood. It's almost time now, Daddy, and all of those friends of Billy's will be there and Billy said he was going to break my arms and legs. He's going to kill me, Daddy, he's going to kill me.' He ran to his father. He put both arms around his waist and laid his head against his father's big chest. He was sobbing and crying for the first time since the note came.

'Here, here, old man. Buckle up.' His father pushed him away from him. He took out his handkerchief and handed it to him. 'You've got to learn to be a man,' he said.

'Billy Houghton's a whole year older than I am, Daddy. He's a dirty fighter. Ask Sammy Myers. Just ask him.'

'No son of mine is afraid to fight, do you hear me? Johnny, do you hear me?'

Johnny let the handkerchief fall on the floor. The kitchen clock showed it was six twenty-five. His eyes widened and his lips began to quiver. He could say that his side hurt. It really did hurt a little. His mother, his mother; he could tell his mother. His father walked out of the kitchen without saying a word.

Johnny stood there for a few seconds. His head was spinning and everything was changing and would never be the same. And before he knew what he was doing he ran from the kitchen, past his father looking out that narrow window by the front door. He ran upstairs into his mother's room. He was sobbing on her red linen dress, and she was kissing him, as Julia did, and patting his back, saying that

she would telephone Billy Houghton's mother and settle the matter. She had the receiver in her hand when his father walked into the room.

'Do you know about this?' said his mother.

'He's going to fight Billy Houghton. He's going to fight whether he loses or not.'

'Billy's a whole year older than Johnny. He's a mean little devil, and if you think I'm going to stand by and see my son mutilated for life, you're crazy.' She started to dial Mrs. Houghton's number.

'Put down that receiver,' he shouted at her, coming nearer to where she stood by the bed.

She banged it down.

'If it's the last thing I do,' said his father, 'I'm going to teach my son to be a man. He's going to stand up and put up a fight whether he loses or not. Do you hear me, Betty, do you hear me?'

'You don't know what you're talking about. You've had entirely too much to drink.'

His father moved closer to his mother. Johnny backed towards the wall.

'I'm going to make a man of him . . . inside, that's where it counts.' His father beat his own chest with his fist. 'I'm going to have my son a man before it's too late.'

'But listen to reason, Jimmy. Being a man hasn't a thing to do with fighting older boys, a boy who's a perfect beast. Why, that little Sammy Myers was taken to the hospital and the Houghtons nearly had a lawsuit on their hands.'

'Johnny's going to go out there and stand up like a man.'

'You're in a horrible humour. You've been in a bad mood ever since you got home. You're seeing things all wrong today.'

'I see things right. Betty. My boy is going to be a man, real man. Do you hear me. Betty? He's got to go out there and look Billy Houghton in the eye before it's too late. Do you hear me, Betty? Do you hear me? Before it's too late.'

His father was practically yelling. He was just about to strike his mother, and his mother was leaning backward, over her bed.

His father went downstairs with him, leaving Julia and his mother crying together in the bedroom. When Julia had spoken up for Johnny, his father had told her to keep out of this. 'You're what's the matter with my son, damn you.' As Johnny went down the stairs beside his father, with his father's arm on his shoulder, he wondered if Julia would have to leave him, after the fight. His father was telling him to put up a good fight like a man. He was telling him that he would be watching from the upstairs window and that

everything was going to be all right. Johnny was biting his lips to keep from crying again, to keep from telling his father how he hated him now and how nothing between them would ever, ever be the same. When he went out of the heavy front door, he looked back at his father from halfway down the walk. His father was wiping his eyes with his handkerchief.

He crossed that part of the lawn where he had lined up his lead soldiers on parade. He felt like Mary Queen of Scots and Bette Davis secretly dying of a brain tumour upstairs and Montcalm dying in lace and blue velvet at Quebec. He started down that smooth asphalt road that bound together the houses by the country club, like a soft blue-grey velvet sash. He walked as straight as he could, but he could hardly see anything that he was passing because his eyes felt like they were dead fish eyes floating around in warm salty water.

It was the laughter and 'Lookit-that-sissy-coming' and a half-dozen yells that told him he was at the Doriot lot. He wiped his eyes on his shirt sleeves, and he saw six boys squatting under a live oak, smoking cigarettes. He saw Billy Houghton get up from the six, throw away his cigarette with three fingers like a killer, stomp it out and come toward him. Billy Houghton was coming nearer and nearer and he was spitting on his hands and rubbing them together. The other boys got up and were gathering around like black crows and buzzards and the killer's yes men: Johnny felt more and more that this was horribly unfair and he didn't understand why he was standing all by himself on the Doriot lot, why the world was closing in on him.

PIER PAOLO PASOLINI

Appenine

Translated from the Italian by William Weaver

Theatre of hilltops, drunken, lime-sown,
silent, the silent moon gives you life,
tender over Lucchesia, on the fields

that are all too human, burning
on Versilia's shore; so whole at the void
of the sea, the bemused moon on hulls,

in holds, wrinkled sails, after old,
popular voyages for fish between
Elba, the cape of Argentario . . .

The moon — there is no other life —
where Italy is whitened from Pisa,
shut on the Arno, lost in a dead

festival, to Lucca, modest in the grey
light of its relic, Catholic
perfection . . .

The human moon from these chill
stones reflects the heat
of lofty passions, as if beyond

their silence a dead ardour
sweated from its silent origin;
marble at Lucca or Pisa, at Orvieto
sandstone . . .

II

The moon kindles
 only greyness, where azure
 Etruscans sleep; it only
 bends to hear liturgical boys
 from Pienza's cobbles or
 Tarquinia's on the bare,
 resounding hills from Appenines
 it hollows out Orvieto, crowded
 on the hill suspended over miniature
 fields that goldsmiths plough, and the sky.
 Orvieto, unharmed by centuries, pulp
 of walls, roofs on earthen alleys, the mule's
 exodus through pulp of youths
 kneaded into the stone.
 Closed in its nerves, its lucid gait,
 between riven walls and tilting
 houses, the mule climbs up from below
 with baskets of flaming grapes
 on his flanks, beneath the head
 of Boniface, about to be dust, defended
 by baroque loftiness in the wall's
 medieval niche.

III

Boniface is absent from his gesture,
 David's hand is heavy, holding
 the sling, and Ilaria, only Ilaria . . .
 Within the cloistered transept
 as in an aquarium, her eyelids are
 of resigned marble, her breast
 where her hands join in calm,
 absent being. Here is Italy's dawn
 and evening, its lean

birth, its dying without colour.
Sleep, the hollow centuries; no scalpel
can lay bare the tender massiveness

of these eyelids.

Jacopo with Ilaria sculptured Italy,
lost in death, when her age
was more pure, more necessary.

IV

Beneath shut eyelids, among his
lice laughs the boy from Cassino,
sold by his parents, on the raging

banks of the Aniene, a killer
and a whore nurse him, through
the colonial nights when Ciampino

blinded with washed-out stars
hums with the planes of monarchs,
and along sick boulevards, the beat

of sex's sentinels, in devastating
waits around the earthy latrines,
from San Paolo to San Giovanni, to

the hottest corners of Rome you hear
the supine hours of the night ringing
in nineteen fifty-one, there is a cracking

of the membrane . . .

In Ilaria's closed eyelids trembles
the infected membrane of Italian
nights . . . soft with breezes, calm

with lights . . . shouts of young people,
hot, ironic, bloody . . . smells
of hot rags, wet now . . . Quips

APPENINE

from old, Southern voices . . . choruses
from Emilia, weakened in ponds and villages,
from vice's province, in the white

hearts of the bulbs in dirty bars
in the suburbs of the city
flesh and poverty find placid,

airy sounds . . . and then? In the vellum
and massive eyelids of Ilaria, nothing
that is not sleep. Morning's shapes

that death, precocious, in this girl
bound to marble. Italy has nothing left
but her marble death, her barren,

interrupted youth . . .

Under her eyelids, in her sleep,
the earth, incarnate, in the moonlight
has a virgin transport in the silver

dark that on the landslip of the Appenine
declines, steep, towards coasts where
the Tyrrhenian and the Adriatic foam is pearled.

Within the round enclosure of skins
and metal, isolated among the thickets,
on a bare patch of grass, in a circle,

on the green, green slopes of Soracte,
sleeps a damp, sooty flock, and the shepherd,
his limbs all contracted

on the limestone.

V

Under those closed lids, Luni, like
a sheepfold, the fossil town,
and the timid cities where the Appenine

is perfume, more human in graven hedges,
among the warm arables of Tuscany,
or where more dead the unremembering parishes

are absorbed in Etruscan stone, in this old age
fade virginal, clear sounds
of evening, And it is unravelled —

the range, in the centuries' sillions,
the veins of the Serchio, the Ombrone
and, beyond the rough funnels and earthen beacons

of dawn, the Tiber, in the Appenine's
dust-cloud, the Tiber pagan still . . .
Rome, in glades of paeons, ruins,

Alexandrine and baroque, gilds
in the moon, and undone, irreligious
slums, where everything is unknown

that is not sex, caves inhabited
by faeces and children; the river-streets
from the Pincian to the Aventine,

to the slopes of the naked San Paolo
where the lights yellow the hot atmosphere.
resound with footsteps that stain

the damp stones, and the Roman evening,
echoing them, like a membrane scratched
by a vicious finger, reveals, more sharp,
the smell of urine.

VI

An army encamped and waiting
to become Christian in the Christian
city occupies a rotting expanse

of filthy grass in the burnt campagna:
he, too, hopes to go down amid
the civilian light, awaiting a human

habitation, he from Puglia or Sardegna,
in a pigsty, the muddy slaughter-block
in blind villages with shining churches.

modern, with skyscrapers.

Under his closed eyelids this
disheartened siege of a million souls
with naïve skulls, eyes quick

to catch on, among the infested swamps
of Pietralata.

VII

The Appenine, red, blue is lost along
the white South, absorbed under
the closed eyelids, in the halo

of the sea at Gaeta and Sperlonga . . .

Beyond mount Massico Sparanise
sets candelabra of olive-trees, in festoons
of plants climbing on the Elysian

glades, where the lamps shine
at San Nicola . . . the African bay
is thrown open at Naples, a nation

in the nation's belly . . .

And Jacopo no longer (more recent
is Ilaria's sleep) beneath that eyelid
sets in civil form the people's world

of Italy, and against the dry backgrounds
of his landscape no longer strips
in moral light, that does not hide

the body's darkness, a hand that unites
to God the poor neighbourhood; down here
all is pre-human, and humanly rejoices,

against this vulgar laughter was
and is useless any word
of salvation; here shines the most

glowing indifference in colours
of the Renaissance, as if for sun
or shade there was needed only

this bold presence, of rags, gold,
with—in the eyes—the calloused laugh
of the tenements fasting from love;

Latin boys under her closed
eyelids sing in the hearts of the race
of the poor who have stayed barbarians

of its origin's epoch, excluded
from the secret events of Christian light,
from the necessary movement of the centuries;

and of Italy they make, ironically,
their own belonging, in a dialect of laughter
that no city or province but a ridge's

obsession, a neighbourhood, keeps engraved
in itself; if each closed in sex's heat,
his own measure, lives among a people

abandoned to the truest cynicism and the truest
passion; to denying himself with violence
and violent self-bestowal; clear

in its mystery, pure and corrupt . . .

If each, an expert, knows the naïve language
of incredulity, of insolence,
irony, in the wisest of dialects

and most vicious, shuts his eyelids
without conscience, and is lost in a people
whose clamour is nothing but silence.

‘What do you do in the World?’

A Letter from Athens

Always, they ask us, ‘Why are you going?’ The question comes like the Seventh Wave, always the seventh, and it is never really answered. Perhaps it is, basically, that America is too big to go *into*. You cannot penetrate from within the successive hidden walls around cities, hamlets, towns or the deserts, or corn-fields, or the dusty border-roads where chickens lie among the grape-leaves in their own blood. Like the tip of the turtle’s nose, you can be pulled so far into the shell, and no farther.

So you decide against the shell altogether, and leave.

The questions come in waves, and we depart in waves. Many of us find nothing on ‘the outside’ but the World, and scuttle back into that were-world, America. There, perching on box-cars and tenement rooftops, or lying among the long staves of wheat, we sing our songs of jazz and narcotics, lynchings and all the other ditties of the black honeymoon we must pass with the earth.

But some stay, and stay, and never come back.

So we have left that loving were-world of America, plagued by politics, draped in skies full of buzzing stars and jetstreams—we have left it and are in the World.

So now, we say, What do you do in the world?

Most of us are artists, and we leave because in America, we feel, artists are hunted like crows. It is a strange feeling; perhaps we are afraid of more than this. But we can hear the shots in the night—bang! bang! bang!—bang go the crows. We leave because we feel like these mysterious birds, because we are mistaken for crows.

It is customary in America, to flee something you think is a crow hunter. Henry James was not the first of these refugees, and there have been thousands since. Hemingway and Eliot, Stein and Pound, and all the drifters and screwballs and other beautiful people who blew into Paris, London and Algiers, after the last (big) war.

We are looking for something to do in the world. What we are, we are pretty sure. What we can *do*—that is another story.

Back there, in that were-world invented by Poe and Whitman and Mark Twain, you are always sure what you can do. In the city, running with the crazy touchstone philosophers, zig-zagging from the drunken lake at Central Park to the secret jazz-stalls where music pours in avalanches from the lips of madmen, back to the miniature zoo which is your room, six flights up and lost in the wilderness of holy rooftops, you always have your bearings, though you are always lost. Being *more* lost has become the game, but getting lost is another trick. Perhaps you can start a cross-country walk and return to the rooftops, eyes streaming with the endless roll of scenery only Thomas Wolfe would have dared write about, your fingers twitching with the bewilderment of distances.

But the simplest recipe for lostness, for beatness, is to fly right into the centre of the wheel, heels kicking up behind. In you go, mistaken for more than the little bad black bird of carrion and at length (after the sentimental Okay of the angels sounds, and you learn the hippest language of all, which is a mixture of laughter and sniffing, and includes such words as *heva*, *horse*, *piece* and *The Man*) find yourself swinging from the bars of the mythical bye-bye land of the inner America, spelled out in the names of San Quentin, Sing-Sing and Mattawan. This is where all the lost crows are calling. Deep down in the ravished corn.

So this is the surety of America: you can be beat. Man, you say, this is a beat land. On New York's East Side the artists live in a subterranean confusion of cells and lofts, underground because they are so high above the streets, rarely speaking or singing. At nights they wind, like Pilgrims in a grotesque comic opera of Paul Klee's aquatints, to the bars and jazz clubs. Where jazz is played sturdy angels of the Musicians' Union guard the doors, popping off saxophone-playing crows who simply want to blast their brains into the silent crowd for a night, gratis, and who weave away mumbling to their cells and beds. Jazz swells and shakes you. So in you go, in go the sullen never-speaking ones, to hold to the only flower that seems to grow in the soil of the beat land. In you go to listen, or gossip, and always to dream.

But out, way out in the world, beyond the crow-hunters known as They (They have always done it, whatever it is) you have a new set of picture puzzles to play with. For you must put together again the person you have systematically taken apart with the tools They have given you. It is time to look for order, to investigate the sub-soil without having your nose rubbed in it, to reassemble the mangled soul, or tie again shoe-laces of the several feet.

This is the point at which you loose your gravity, and become

‘WHAT DO YOU DO IN THE WORLD?’

merely serious. The maudlin self-pity of ‘beatness’ is left behind, and it can be seen, shimmering like a slug on the American horizon.

It is something England does not know, nor Greece, nor Italy. A feeling born straight from the black American soil, a need for regeneration of each generation, an apartness, a toiling lonesomeness in the carousal.

Outside, it is a putting-together, a purification of a sort. And they say: ‘Why do you go—what does it avail?’

‘What doth it avail
To drive forth a snail
Or to make a sail
From an herring’s tail?’

It is an opportunity to seek out the pulp, to look for the pulse which swells beneath all you have been fooled into thinking is the Bottom of things. This was the job in the loins of gimcrack America, but you did not know it. The mist was too thick; the fog had settled everywhere.

This is your job in the world.

And in this world, on whatever continent, the pulse will be older and more profound, but just as wild, and you will not be beat.

OWEN LEEMING

Two Sonnets



I

Blond floor of grass, wind-waved,
Young scalp of a young land below shaly walls,
Valley walls, with a murmured delicacy of waterfalls,
Of cleanest river dashing over rapids paved

In rocks and round shingle; and with high-away birdcalls;
Otherwise silence, tongued with holiness, great
As any dimension or dawning in time or out of it . . . a state
Of keen wakefulness like hushed assembly halls.

There comes a dappling of cold when clouds obliterate
The hot face of a midday sun and send
Zeppelin shadows across the hills. To pretend
Meant a great deal then. A boy by a gate

And a wire fence knew only this world, kenned
Only grass-blond freedom, not seeing its end.

TWO SONNETS

II

Night and traffic drum nearly, farly; but only fret
Our mutual tacitness; our words being higher than sound
As our laxed bodies are beyond struggle, crowned
With peace, London strengthens our silence. Let
Cities be busy with machines, with all the fatigues that beset
Their multiplicity of interlocking lives. We have downed
Our jobs with our clothes, are one, while all around
Lorries distantly rumble in a night-sky coronet
Of cloud shred and stars.

 Your eyelash prickling my cheek,
Breath fanning my cold lips, we are as dead,
In a coffin of sweet contentment. Love has been said,
Done, and now is known. After the sugary peak
Comes womb-rest; whereas London is outside sight,
Far from you, woman, or from me, this night.

The English Review



The years between 1908 and 1918 saw a burst of energy and change in the literary periodical, a process that marked a wider energy and change in the world of literature, art and ideas generally. A new artistic generation was springing up, expressing, it felt, a new consciousness among mankind. There was really no room for 'new consciousness' in the older journals; they were not sympathetic to the murmurs of literary revolution. The result was the development of a special kind of literary paper, the 'little magazine'.

Yet the first of the papers to provide a haven for the apostles of the modern movement was not really a 'little magazine' at all, but a bulky monthly in a blue cover, *The English Review*, which first appeared in December 1908 under the editorship of Ford Madox Hueffer, and the imprint of Duckworth and Company. Perhaps it was appropriate that the benevolent father of the younger writers who were then forming into groups where their aims and interests could develop under stimulus was Ford Madox Hueffer. The young people were seeking a centre for publication and, almost by accident, *The English Review* was able and willing to provide it; the encouragement of youthful genius was a secondary consideration for the review, yet nonetheless it was this bias that made it the first modern literary paper. Hueffer, an Edwardian in appearance and, in some ways, in spirit, was a technical revolutionary—that is to say, he was an adherent of that international republic of letters which, with Paris as its centre, had been perplexing itself for half a century with problems of style and technique. Hueffer, as novelist, poet and critic, was a revolutionary in the manner of James or Flaubert or Turgenev; and, conscious of the need for experiment in art, he was more than ready to listen to the bright young men of 1908, when very few other people were.

Hueffer was a poor businessman (though he was good at shaming his distinguished contributors into letting him have pieces at a low rate), and only retained full control of the review for a year; probably

only the first thirteen issues are his as regards literary contents. During the time that Hueffer was editor,¹ the paper was to support many important writers, young and old, and indeed was to become a model for the twentieth-century literary periodical. One aspect of its modernity was its sense that, in an increasingly democratic society, insistence on values constituted a poor commercial risk. 'To imagine that a magazine devoted to imaginative literature and technical criticism alone would find more than a hundred readers was a delusion that I in no way had,' Hueffer recollected in *Return to Yesterday* (1931); and so there was added a section on current affairs. He was aware, too, that the twentieth-century literary periodical must approach, as it were, a specialized, a minority, audience; he advised his intending contributors that his appeal was to 'grown-up minds whose leisure can be interested in something else than the crispness and glitter of a popular statement'. The circulation of *The English Review* was never large; Douglas Goldring, who was Hueffer's sub-editor, thinks that the original printing order of the first number was 5,000 copies, and circulation seems to have declined from that. Substantial in form (the first number contained 192 pages for 2s. 6d.) and in content, it was a good buy. Its special interest must have been largely for the young—not only for the young writer, as Pound pointed out, but also for young people with intellectual interests and rather advanced views such as D. H. Lawrence's friend, Jessie Chambers ('E.T.'), who recalls in her memoir on Lawrence the excitement with which her family greeted the first number (shown them by Lawrence) in the Midlands, where they were to some extent cut off from the topics of the day (though they were remarkably in touch). 'The coming of the *English Review* into our lives was an event, one of the few really first-rate things that happen now and again in a lifetime,' she noted in *D. H. Lawrence: A Personal Record* (1935). There were the leading writers of the time, mingling with new translations by Constance Garnett from the Russians—Tolstoy, Dostoevsky—and more and more the work of the interesting younger men. For the amateur of letters there were more sober quarterlies. The review described itself in its first editorial as being devoted to the arts, to letters and to ideas, with no party bias but with some penchant to views that would be called 'advanced'. It asked its readers to be critical, a positive challenge at the time.

The English Review, Douglas Goldring recollected in *South Lodge* (1943), 'was to perform a glorious and much needed service to

¹ Under Austin Harrison, the next editor, the literary standard was to some extent maintained by the appointment of Norman Douglas as assistant editor.

English letters by setting up and maintaining a standard of literary values, of real writing'; it invoked from the start the risk of professing serious intentions. Hueffer's firm faith in the value of literary movements and in the need for self-conscious technique and discipline (especially if it was what he called 'impressionist' or 'post-Flaubertian') indicates what he hoped for from other writers; this was, he said in an advice he sent out, 'either distinction of individuality or force of conviction, either literary gifts or earnestness of purpose, whatever the purpose may be—the criterion of inclusion being the clarity of diction, the force or the illuminative value of the views expressed'. His concern for the art of writing led him to intermingle a variety of generations and styles. He found, somewhat to his surprise, that it was not easy to bring into contact, as he wished to, the most important writers of the time—'of all the writers who contributed to the early numbers scarcely one failed to write and say that *The English Review* was ruined by the inclusion of every other contributor'.¹ In his first (anonymous) editorial, Hueffer described the paper as 'a periodical devoted to the arts, to letters and ideas'; and in revising this piece for publication in book form in *The Critical Attitude* (1911) he elaborated his contentions. The artist is, he said, the only man who is concerned with the values of life, who interprets creeds and philosophies in terms of human contacts. He seeks the artist who is interpreting the modern world:

... it is in the hope of discovering where there exists in these islands any trace of sober, sincere, conscientious and scientific body of artists, crystallizing, as it were, modern life in its several aspects, that these pages have been written. And, for the matter of that, it was for the definite and unashamed purpose of promoting such a school, were it found to exist, or did it seem possible to found one—it was for this definite and unashamed purpose that *The English Review* was begun.

Hueffer (he later changed his name by deed-poll to Ford Madox Ford) was thirty-five when he produced the first number of the paper. Although the review did not mention the editor's name, Hueffer was a great personal influence, an active figure in the literary scene who was, in December 1932, to found in Paris a second distinguished venture in literary periodicals, *The Transatlantic Review*. He was a curious figure; poet, novelist, critic, a propagandist for impressionism, an unreliable but lively reminiscer; he seemed to find himself at home in any generation. He conceived the idea of having a periodical of his own so that he could 'meddle in English literary affairs'. The literary scene was changing; 'the old literary gang of the *Athenaeum*—

¹ Ford Madox Hueffer, *Thus to Revisit* (London, 1921), p. 60.

Spectator-Heavy Artillery order were', it seemed to him, 'slowly decaying', and 'young lions were not only roaring but making carnage of their predecessors'. The young lions—Wells, Bennett; Conrad and James, still both experimenting; George Moore and Yeats—were not all so very young, but Hueffer had hopes of them; and then there was plenty of undiscovered talent:

It seemed to me that if that nucleus of writers could be got together with what of undiscovered talent the country might hold, a Movement might well be started. I had one or two things I wanted to say. They were mostly on the technical side of writing.¹ Hueffer found a 'politician friend' who agreed to provide half of the £5,000 capital necessary, and also to edit the current affairs side; this man found he had to withdraw and Hueffer called in another friend, Arthur Marwood. The politician then found he had to withdraw his money also and the project was about to fold when, according to Hueffer's dramatic story, Marwood was roused to indignation by the rejection, by other literary papers, of Thomas Hardy's long poem, 'A Sunday Morning Tragedy', because of the supposed indelicacy of its theme; the money was found, and the review went on, with Hardy's poem as the first item in the first number. But actual intentions extended more widely than the publishing of a single poem; Hueffer wanted the paper to be the nucleus of some sort of movement, a kind of '*aube de siecle* Yellow Book' that would 'combine the already eminent with some of the Young who were then knocking at the doors of our Athenaeum'. Hueffer, a man for whom literary society had immense fascination and interest, enjoyed numbering literary personalities among his friends, or discovering the new genius or the new movement. He was a challenging rather than a profound critic, and he was dangerously inclined to self-dramatization; the review was organized to something of a critical scheme but with a dependence on the bias and interests of his own personality. He had a Boswellian fondness for cultivating personalities and a strong delight in the upsurge of a new movement: 'Movements make for friendships, enthusiasms, self-sacrifice, mutual aid—all fine things. . . . I wish that a public-spirited man or two could be found to throw away a couple of hundred pounds each—to be ready to lose that amount in order to start a Movement. Any Movement,' he declared in *Thus to Revisit*. The review must be seen against the background of an active literary social life, filled with the extravagant dilletantism of Pound, with his green billiard-cloth trousers, pink coat and single turquoise

¹ Ford Madox Ford, *Return to Yesterday: Reminiscences 1894-1914* (London, 1931), p. 377.

earring, and Wyndham Lewis, in long black coat buttoned up to the neck, against editorial work done in the stalls of the Shepherds Bush Empire during the duller turns, against literary luncheons and causeries, against Hueffer's rather chaotic personal life (documented by Douglas Goldring in his biography of Hueffer, *The Last Pre-Raphaelite* (London, 1948)). The old international republic of letters still, to some extent, existed; there was still a fairly integrated literary life. Ezra Pound, one of the review's discoveries, told H. L. Mencken in a letter that its achievement depended very largely on the kind of personal touch that existed between editor and writers. And when Ronald Duncan was founding his magazine, *The Townsman*, Pound gave characteristic advice:

Naow lemme tell yuh! ! A successful (intellectually) review is made by a small compact group of writers. Should be at least four. . . . *The English Review*, when it lived, had really three generations—stratified groups with four or six in each.¹

Pound's comment is sound 'magazine philosophy'; a review needs a firm centre, a compact group with some similarity of viewpoint or opinion who provide the paper with its character. As Pound remarked, in this respect the review was divided; it mixed, as we have seen quite deliberately, what Hueffer liked to call 'the Immortals' and 'les Jeunes'. What was remarkable was that no real damage ensued from this split personality; in fact it was this split condition which was, in the end, the review's character; it was a paper that would print Pound, Lewis and D. H. Lawrence next to James, Conrad, Hardy and Wells.

It was in this interest of Hueffer's in 'les Jeunes', in his whole effort to make his paper a kind of collaboration of all the literary great, that the strength of the review lay; its collapse after Hueffer was ousted from editorship shows that it was his gift as impresario that carried the paper. And it seems that figures of this sort—part the writer, part the promoter—were needed at this particular time; at any rate, the literary generation threw up at least two—Hueffer, and Pound, who determined in 1912 to have a movement and announced that the most interesting tendency in the English literary scene was *imagisme*—this before he had really decided what *imagisme* was and who the imagist poets were. Hueffer, in a similar spirit, set to work to chivvy literature into doing something. 'I may claim to have in my blood the tic of combatting Academicism and the hope of discovering new, beautiful talents,' he said in *Thus to Revisit*. He happily turned to the new generation of London literary life that contained such budding movements as Futurism, Cubism

¹ (ed. D. D. Paige), *The Letters of Ezra Pound, 1907-1941* (London, 1951), p. 378.

and Vorticism, all of which were a mingling of art with literature, and such budding writers as Pound, Lewis, Lawrence, Norman Douglas, F. S. Flint, 'H. D.', Richard Aldington and T. S. Eliot, many of whom Hueffer published, in some cases for the first time:

In our Editorial salons they found chaises longues and sofas on which to stretch themselves whilst they discussed the fate of already fermenting Europe. So, for three or four years, culminating in the London season of 1914, they made a great deal of noise in a city that was preparing to reverberate with echoes of blasts still greater. They found their earthly home and general headquarters in a polychromatic and stifling cellar beneath the New Gallery. There—*au son de fifres de crotale!*—they plotted the blowing of Parnassus to the moon. They came near to doing it.¹ Their cause was the Non-Representational in art, *Vers Libre* in poetry. The important thing, for Hueffer, was that they were a movement, or several movements:

A movement in the Arts—*any* movement—leavens a whole Nation with astonishing rapidity; its ideas pour though the daily, the weekly and the monthly press with the rapidity of water pouring through interstices until at last they reach the Quarterlies and disturb even The Academicians asleep over their paper baskets.² So May Sinclair introduced Ezra Pound, 'the greatest writer to the greatest editor' of the time, as she said; Wyndham Lewis walked in, silently produced his manuscripts and presented them to Hueffer (who in one version of the story was in his bath) and unspeakingly walked out again; Jessie Chambers sent in work by D. H. Lawrence, then a young schoolteacher. And Hueffer and Marwood began to feel that life was really worth living:

It was—truly—like an opening world. . . . For, if you have worried your poor dear brain for at least a quarter of a century over the hopelessness of finding, in Anglo-Saxondom, any traces of the operation of conscious art—it was amazing to find these young creatures not only evolving theories of writing and the plastic arts, but receiving in addition an immense amount of what is called 'public support'.³

It was, indeed, an opening world that Hueffer found himself in. It is difficult to characterize the ebullient mood of the few years before 1914, just as it is difficult to define the sense of defeat and loss that possessed this same generation in the four years that followed. Before 1914, the world seemed ripe for a period of glorious progress;

¹ Hueffer, *Thus to Revisit* (London, 1921), pp. 59-64.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 136-7.

the twentieth century would be the height of human endeavour; the possibilities for art seemed immense; the young people among whom Hueffer moved were about to change the world. 'We are the first men of a future that has not materialized,' cried Wyndham Lewis, looking back on the period. He went on to explain what was lost:

Europe was full of titanic stirrings and snortings—a new art coming into flower to celebrate or to announce a 'new age'. . . . In 1914 a ferment of the artistic intelligence occurred in the west of Europe. And it looked to many people as if a great historic 'school' was in process of formation. . . . In every case the structural and philosophic rudiments of life were sought out. On all hands a return to first principles was witnessed. . . . These arts were not entirely misnamed 'new' arts. They were arts especially intended to be the delight of this particular world. Indeed they were the heralds of great social changes. Then down came the lid—the day was lost, for art, at Sarajevo.¹

The debt owed by the modern movement to Hueffer has been pointed to by Ezra Pound. In a letter to Michael Roberts, when Roberts was writing his book on T. E. Hulme, Pound attempts to correct the standard view that the great seminal agency of the pre-war years was Hulme's Frith Street circle—the group of young poets and writers (Pound among them) who met regularly in the former Venetian embassy. Hulme was not the great figure; no-one knew he was there—'the man who did the work for English writing was Ford Madox Hueffer (now Ford). The old crusted lice and advocates of corpse language knew that *The English Review* existed'.² Nor was Hueffer's influence simply that of an editor; Pound expressed a personal debt to his critical writing 'as found in the preface to his collected poems, and in stray criticisms of Henry James and other prose writers'.³ Certainly Pound, who was at this point something of an intellectual magpie, collected the ideas behind *imagisme* not simply from Hulme's idea of the 'image' but also from Hueffer's poetic theory of 'impressionism', which he adumbrates in the introduction to his collected poems and elsewhere.

Yet although *The English Review* helped to form and organize the new order of the literary scene, it was not in character an advance-guard paper. In appearance it was staid and dignified. From comments like Pound's, too, one would suppose the young were heavily represented; in fact, Pound, Lewis and Lawrence only

¹ Wyndham Lewis, *Blasting and Bombardiering* (London, 1937), pp. 254-262.

² (ed. D. D. Paige), *Letters of Ezra Pound*, p. 389.

³ Ezra Pound, 'On Criticism in General', *Criterion* 1, 2 (December 1922), p. 144.

appeared on a few occasions, not in their most violent modes and not with any editorial blowing of trumpets. Its character was not predominantly revolutionary or critical. It had all that range which entitles it to the name of review; like *The Criterion*, it made a sound balance which conferred rank on the young who managed to break in and a sense of being 'in touch' among the old. It serialized Conrad's *Under Western Eyes* and his *Some Reminiscences*, Tolstoy's *The Raid*, Wells's *Tonobungay*, James's *The Jolly Corner*. It had a section entitled 'The Month', devoted to discussion of literature, politics and international affairs. In addition Hueffer contributed a monthly editorial anonymously, over the initials 'E.R.' (English Review?), devoted to discussion of the artist's role in society, of the work of Bernard Shaw, Arnold Bennett, H. G. Wells, John Galsworthy, of the problem that publishers are finding it uneconomic to publish serious works. In the third number there begins to appear a section called 'Modern Poetry', printing Yeats, de la Mare, Bridges and others. There is generally a high standard of contributors—Dostoevsky, Shaw, Arnold Bennett, E. M. Forster and so on. Between poems by Eden Philpotts and an article in French on peace and war in Europe, there suddenly appears:

'Damn it all! all this our South stinks peace.

You whoreson dog, Papiols, come! Let's to music!'

It is the opening of Pound's 'Sestina: Altaforte', the first of several poems that the review published. These are among Pound's earliest publications; he was newly arrived in England. Pound says that he came to England because he thought Yeats knew more about poetry than anyone else; at Yeats's he met Florence Farr who took him to Hulme's dining club; his publisher, Elkin Matthews, had sent him to Ernest Rhys who introduced him to May Sinclair who took him to Hueffer. Hueffer had on a velvet jacket and Pound promptly did an imitation of him. In November 1909 the section of 'Modern Poetry' contained a long poem called 'A Still Afternoon', by D. H. Lawrence. This, Lawrence's first appearance in print save for a story printed in *The Nottinghamshire Guardian* under someone else's name, was the result of its submission by Jessie Chambers (the 'Miriam' of *Sons and Lovers*). Hueffer not only published the verse but gave Lawrence considerable personal support, publishing more of his verse and stories, asking to see him, giving him a first introduction into literary society. Hueffer, said Lawrence, 'accepted the "Dreams" poems for *The English Review*, and was very kind to me, and was the first man I ever met who had a real and true feeling for literature. He introduced me to Edward Garnett who introduced me to the world.'¹

¹ (ed. Aldous Huxley), *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence* (London, 1932), p. 125.

Indeed, Lawrence's literary education had included a serious reading of *The English Review*; Jessie Chambers and he had regarded it as brilliant and unique and he was saddened, in 1913, to find it 'so piffling now'. He told Ernest Collings, an admirer, in a letter of November 1912:

Ford Madox Hueffer discovered I was a genius—don't be alarmed, Hueffer would discover *anything* if he wanted to—published some verse and a story or two, sent me to Mr Heinemann with *The White Peacock* and left me to paddle my own canoe. I very nearly wrecked it and did for myself. Edward Garnett, like a good angel, fished me out.¹

As for Wyndham Lewis, he introduced himself to the Holland Park offices of the review. The manuscripts he left there were also printed by Hueffer. A nucleus of young writers was developing.

But the review was, according to Violet Hunt, losing £120 a month; Hueffer was, as he said, no business man. He was compelled to find fresh backers, who took over the review leaving him as nominal editor. The August 1909 issue, the last over which Hueffer had full editorial control, showed signs of change; the publishers were Chapman and Hall instead of Duckworth and Co, and the current affairs section was enlarged at the expense of the literary contents. At one point Hueffer returned from a holiday to find Galsworthy in his editorial chair, appointed there by the backers; on discovering the situation, Galsworthy withdrew gracefully. But by the end of 1910 the only way to keep the paper alive was to sell it, and Violet Hunt persuaded her friend Sir Alfred Mond (later Lord Melchett), the liberal politician, to buy it. As his political views differed from Hueffer's, he had to relieve him of the editorship and to appoint Mr Austin Harrison, a former correspondent of *The Daily Mail*, as editor.

The issue for December 1910 was a double number containing poetry by Thomas Hardy and the first part of the serialized *Under Western Eyes*. With the issue for February 1911 the words 'edited by Austin Harrison' appeared on the cover, though Hueffer had produced this number for the new editor. It was the last; he was to have no more control over the paper, and from this point the literary interest of the review declines greatly. It became a general review with (diminishing) literary interests. Although it published many good things (Conrad's *The Shadow Line*, stories by Lawrence, E. M. Forster, Arnold Bennett) it lacked what Hueffer's own character had given it, a centre; it was no longer in contact with the trends of the literary scene; it was not actively of service, as it was under

¹ (ed. Aldous Huxley), *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence* (London, 1932), p. 72.

Hueffer, to the vital processes of literature. Allen Tate once remarked that the good editor should be an autocrat, by which he means a powerful core to the paper, giving it character. This is what Hueffer certainly was; like T. S. Eliot when he edited *The Criterion*, Hueffer largely by his own vigour of character rendered the fragments—the contributions as they gathered—into a whole, with an overall principle and order. The paper was a monthly, which gave it, by comparison with the quarterlies, a rakish air; yet it was always dignified and considered. The committed, *avant garde* 'little magazines' followed after *The English Review*, when the new young had already got an hearing; what had been needed had been the support of a respectable review not given over entirely to revolution, and this was what Hueffer had provided. In 1920 Douglas Goldring drew attention to the nature of the effort; it was, he said, a gallant adventure, which had rarely had an equal before or since, and Hueffer had never been given adequate thanks:

In 1909 there were distinct signs of a revival and Mr Hueffer—a critic of discernment and courage, possessed by a distinguished passion for good writing—made his choice of all the best work that was available. Quality was the sole criterion; and among the then 'unknown' he discovered everyone who was worth discovering.¹

Ezra Pound, one of the presiding geniuses of the period, has been one of the few to award thanks, though perhaps in part to divert attention from T. E. Hulme, his other mentor in the newly active London literary scene:

The event of 1909-1910 was Ford Madox (Hueffer) Ford's *English Review*, and no greater condemnation of the utter filth of the whole social system of that time can be dug up than the fact of that review's passing out of his hands. Its list of contributors should prevent critical exaggeration of our Frith Street *cenacle* without in the least damaging Hulme's record.²

The English Review had one plain purpose, implied in a remark of Hueffer's in a letter to Herbert Read. 'It is only the finding of a New Form that is a worthy occupation,' he told Read; as for the wider issues, 'I never knew what metaphysics were.' It was left to people like Hulme and Orage to talk about the philosophical implications of the change in taste; Hueffer, like Pound, was a technician—'Criticism concerns itself with methods and with methods and again with methods—and with nothing else,' he wrote in an

¹ Douglas Goldring, 'Modern Critical Prose', *Chapbook*, 11, 8 (February 1920), p. 10.

² Ezra Pound, 'This Hulme Business', *Townsmen*, 11, 5 (January 1939).

editorial. The business of criticism was, for him, to aid the artist, and frequently took the form of working reflections. The serious artist was Hueffer's constant concern; a society based on a belief in any other kind of leader was doomed, he said. So he pressed his modern concerns; he was bothered by the rise of the popular press and popular fiction, because of the consequences for serious art; he enjoined on the English reader a critical attitude, the power to appreciate high skill; and for him the conscious artist was the most important figure alive. He was saying this, it must be remembered, in a country 'in love with amateurs', where criticism was considered largely a mean-minded activity and where literature was not to be taken too seriously. According to Wyndham Lewis, a huge middle-class rentier army of the intellectual and the artistic emerged, to cover the entire landscape, to the dismay of the authentic artist, and drawing all the applause to themselves, because they were such *nice* people, and critics were looking, not for artistic perfection, but for social niceness. It was in Hueffer's taking literature seriously, when no-one else really did, that his modernity lay. For him it had a positive social function; it purified and protected the future of the society. He picked on an oddly prescient example to illustrate the fact that the serious critic is always disliked:

Now, supposing that a critic should arise to say that 'Paradise Lost' is a dull and pompous work, and that the figure of Milton, by obscuring the less-known seventeenth-century poets, has shut our eyes to a whole world of lyrical beauty for which all the epics and all the prose writing of Milton can never make amends, all men with their accepted ideas on the literary hierarchy will exclaim against the impertinence or the very atheism of the critic.¹ Was it prescience; or had he just been talking to Pound? At any rate he was a critic of this order, as Pound commented in *Pavannes and Divisions* (New York, Knopf, 1918):

In a country in love with amateurs, in a country where the incompetent have such beautiful manners, and personalities so fragile and charming, that one cannot bear to injure their feelings by the introduction of competent criticism, it is well that one man should have a vision of perfection and that he should be sick to death and disconsolate because he cannot attain it.²

Hueffer realized that he was a gentleman, but it gave him no particular pleasure; there were too many gentlemen and too few writers. Professionals, this was what writing needed; James and

¹ (F. M. Hueffer) 'Editorial', *The English Review*.

² And it seems reasonable to guess that Hueffer, whose true Penelope was Flaubert, was the original of Pound's 'Hugh Selwyn Mauberley'.

Conrad (with whom Hueffer had worked) were both professionals, and Hueffer gave the valuable hint that they had not even been read properly yet. The status of the writer in England was summed up for Hueffer during the demobilization of the army after the war, when the last of the eighteen categories to be released contained: 'Travelling salesmen, circus performers, all writers not regularly employed on newspapers, tramps, pedlars. . . .' And like Pound, and for much the same reasons (Hueffer added the reason that Regent Street had been pulled down) Hueffer finally left London for Paris. The opening world had opened and closed again.

Hueffer's work both as novelist and critic still goes unrecognized, here if not in America, and this is a pity. The comments made above on the serious nature of Hueffer's critical concerns should suggest why at least some of his novels are interesting, not only for their great technical interest and skill, their sense of 'form', and rendering, but also, to put it briefly, for their sense both of the constructive and destructive nature of a society so concerned with manners at a time when those manners are breaking up and throwing the individual upon his resources. In America his reputation has risen and the Tietjens novels have been reissued there.

Certainly he should serve as a model for editors of literary periodicals; his respect for the artist, the creative being, and his determination to nourish genius made him an invaluable figure in those opening years. As Pound remarked ('The Individual in his Milieu', *Criterion* XV, 58, October 1935) it was no mean function that he served:

Twenty years ago little magazines served to break a monopoly, to release communication, mainly about letters, from an oppressive control, and they now wither on the stalk because they refuse to go on from where the late Henry James was interrupted. . . . The little magazine rose with the need for cleansing the language, in the domain of logic and philosophy this meant the elimination of false dilemmas and indefinite middles, in the domain of morals it was basic and essential. . . .

Book Reviews

THE AMERICAN NOVEL AND ITS TRADITION by Richard Chase. (*Bell*. 16s.)

THE POWER OF BLACKNESS by Harry Levin. (*Faber*. 25s.)

PIERRE by Herman Melville. (*John Calder*. 17s. 6d.)

One cannot help flinching at two more books on the American novel: one's eyes defensively blink at the certain prospect of encountering oft-repeated and outlandish syllables—Queequeg, say, or Natty Bumppo—outlandish and, truth to say, fundamentally boring. Mr Chase's thesis is the distinction between the novel and the romance; that the characteristic American contribution to the art of prose fiction has been in the field of romance or what he calls the 'romance-novel'; and that this (especially compared with English work) has resulted in a 'freer, more daring, more brilliant fiction'. This is a fairly reasonable working idea, though Mr Chase puts it much too simply. He mentions the 'sport' of *Wuthering Heights* as the exception which proves his rule, but the romance plays a far more important part in English fiction than he is willing to concede. What about the line which stems from Godwin, through Lytton, takes in much of Dickens and Wilkie Collins, is continued by Stevenson and brought up-to-date by Graham Greene? Nor does it seem to me generally true to say, as Mr Chase asserts, that the English novel has no 'highly skilled practitioners' as has the American. True, we have no self-conscious pioneer of the stature of James (though one thinks of Joyce and Virginia Woolf), but Jane Austen, Stevenson, Meredith, Conrad, are surely as 'skilful' names as Hawthorne, Crane and Hemingway (Mr Chase's examples).

This is perhaps criticizing Mr Chase on the my-father's-car-is-better-than-your-father's-car level, but the uneasiness one feels about the soundness of his general notions is carried over into his discussion of particular works. He is what one might call, after his favourite phrase, a 'to be sure' critic (Mr Trilling is the doyen of the tribe). He knows his material, he has read all the other critics, he

makes his mild distinctions and discoveries—but his book is not really very illuminating. One longs before the end for the more positive tools of a Marxist or Freudian: one longs, indeed, for a few simple value judgements. The English reader will find the main interest of this book in its account of some unfamiliar writers—Brockden Brown, for example, and Frank Norris.

Professor Levin confines himself to Hawthorne, Poe and Melville, and he has a simpler mind than Mr Chase (he says 'to be sure' only once). His main theme is not dissimilar from Mr Chase's: the defence of the romance, and his discussion, though naturally more detailed, is no more satisfying. He is an indefatigable and humourless symbol chaser: about Hawthorne's stories he says: 'Why should this blackness, which lifted for the philosopher, have settled again so heavily on the romancer? The year he spent measuring coal in the port of Boston will not suffice to explain it.' Like Mr Chase, he, too, has read everything, and the following is a not unfair example of the dizzy-making and finally pointless free-association method of his analysis (he is discussing *Moby-Dick*): 'The symbolism of terror is universal. Otherwise, Death would not ride a pale horse in Scripture, and the Ancient Mariner would never have been bedevilled by an albatross. The glitter of Antarctic snow and ice . . . was the single mystery that Poe had left unresolved. W. H. Hudson would explain it as animism, "the mind's projection of itself into nature", our predisposition to be terrified by the exceptional. This may account for the stimulus it lends to visions or hallucinations like that of Hans Castorp in *The Magic Mountain*. One effect of taking mescaline, Henri Michaux has recently testified . . .'

In a few pages at the end of the book Professor Levin draws some general conclusions with which one has great sympathy—for example: 'The culture that made an Ishmael of Herman Melville made a millionaire of P. T. Barnum and a madonna of Mary Baker Eddy.' But scarcely anywhere in his book are there sufficiently precise documentations and *trouvailles* to make one feel that such generalizations are more than tacked on.

In the limp-back Evergreen Books (published in America and distributed here by John Calder) there is the opportunity of obtaining one or two of the works on which Mr Chase and Professor Levin erect their critical edifices—Norris's *The Pit*, and Melville's *The Confidence-Man* and *Pierre*, for instance. Translated into shillings and pence, this series comes out a bit expensive, but speaking off-hand I do not think either *The Pit* or *Pierre* is easily obtainable otherwise, and one never sees copies in the shops of the edition of *The Confidence-Man* which I easily persuaded John Lehmann to bring

out in the Chiltern Library in 1948. In choosing an unfamiliar Melville for that series, I dithered between *Pierre* and *The Confidence-Man*, but I recalled an edition of *Pierre* published by Knopf in, I think, 1930, whereas *The Confidence-Man* did not seem to have been reprinted since the collected edition of 1922-24. Besides, though *Pierre* is less pig-headedly unreadable than *The Confidence-Man*, it is a far more uneven book; in many passages, indeed, scarcely acceptable to a modern reader.

The start of *Pierre*, its terrible archness and purple rhetoric, its pandering to common sentiment about such things as mothers and young love, can surely only be explained as a ghastly attempt by Melville to retrieve his literary fortunes by writing a popular book. Of course, such a feat was by then quite beyond him, and with the change of scene from country to city, three-quarters way through the story, the tone is almost completely abandoned. The hard, bitter style and sentiments of *The Confidence-Man* begin to be heard, and the later book's terrifying, non-moral, Kafkaesque world appears in the brilliant account of the travellers' arrival in the town.

About this novel Mr Chase and Professor Levin are almost comically typical of themselves. Mr Chase: 'For *Pierre* the provisional syntheses offered by the aesthetic sense fail to satisfy the intellect's thirst for absolute truth or to modify its perception of irreconcilables. Thus the rational and the aesthetic are at once incompatible and mutually indispensable.' Professor Levin: "'Blackness advances her banner", in *Pierre*, beyond all previous limits; the Black Knight of Woe, materialized and challenged, rides triumphant. *Pierre*, the landsman, is metaphorically drowned.' Though much has been written about 'the American Novel', and though it is much less good than many American critics seem to think, there is still plenty to be said about it on a far more concrete level than this. How refreshing if either of our critics had made a few simple comparisons—say that the city parts of *Pierre* are rather like *Easy Street*, and that Frank Norris is appropriately like a Stroheim silent film.

ROY FULLER

THE ANGRY DECADE by Kenneth Allsop. (*Peter Owen*. 21s.)

Mr Allsop has written a light, rambling, gossipy book about a congeries of people he evidently could not bring himself to approach more seriously, the so-called Angry Young Men. His book has a subtitle—'A survey of the cultural revolt of the Nineteen-Fifties'—but it is plain that he does not think there has been a genuine revolt, or that what he is surveying has anything to do with real culture.

After dealing in turn with the works of Osborne, Wain, Holroyd, Braine, Amis, Hopkins, Colin Wilson and the rest, Mr Allsop says he considers them all, from a strictly literary standpoint, inferior, the good young writers of the 1950's being such men as Tuohy, Glanville, Newby, Golding and Francis King. These latter, however, have not, he feels, the same 'contemporary' quality; they are not, like the others, 'part of the scene'; they have a place in an honourable literary tradition, but they do not belong, with the Angry Young Men, to the specific context of the Beat Generation and Existentialism, Skiffle Groups, Juvenile Delinquents and the Aldermaston March.

There is undoubtedly some truth in this. The Angry Young Men do somehow or other, albeit only superficially, express the *Zeitgeist*, though this can hardly be in virtue of their being angry or of their being young. They are not remarkably young. Braine was 34, Amis 32 and Wain 28 when each published his first novel; they all started later, not earlier than is usual. Osborne, admittedly, is younger; he had a play in the West End when he was 26, though one does not forget that Noël Coward (whom Osborne much resembles) had a play there when he was 19. Wilson and Holroyd, in producing philosophical books at 24 and 23 respectively, are more conspicuously youthful; but again one remembers that both Hume and Ayer wrote (immeasurably better) philosophical books when they were even younger, and that Mill published his first philosophical articles at the age of 17.

And what about the anger? Some of the writers Mr Allsop names are distinctly irascible, sparking off aggressive letters to editors on the least provocation; but others are equable and indeed urbane. 'Angry' is perhaps only to be read as a Fleet Street word for 'polemical', but even so, it is hard to see it as a unifying factor since some of these men are well to the Right, exalting Nietzsche, while others are well to the Left, exalting Brecht, and some are equally contemptuous of Right and Left. Mr Allsop, it must in fairness be said, is conscious of this difficulty, and he tries to keep the heterogeneous company together by marshalling it into squads: 'the neutralists' (Wain, Amis, Braine), 'the emotionalists' (Osborne, Tynan, Anderson), and 'the law-givers' (Wilson, Hopkins, Holroyd). He then goes on to say that although they all differ so widely in their positive beliefs, these writers are at least alike in *being* polemicists, in being *against something*, in fact, in being against the same thing, namely, the existing social and cultural set-up in England. Theirs is a voice of protest, and it echoes or articulates a sentiment which many English people are feeling in the 1950's.

I am not sure that I have grasped the next part of Mr Allsop's argument, but it seems to be as follows. A Welfare State was established in the British Isles in the 1940's, but ten years later the places of privilege, the rooms at the top, are still effectively reserved for polished fuddy-duddies cut to the old Whig or Tory pattern; the provincial go-getter, the maladroit neurotic and the rough diamond remain unaccepted and unacceptable. Mr Allsop sees the central objective the Angry Young Men's protest as a demand for the revision of the principles of admission to privilege, for an opening of doors; their aim, he writes, is to force 'the Establishment to accept the new intake on its own terms'.

This aim—if it is their aim—is not a very generous or noble one, but I cannot pretend that I am shocked by it. The traditional radical claim for equality has seldom been more than a veiled claim for the enlargement of the ranks of privilege, for the *carrière ouverte aux talents*. Polite disdain for ambition and success has more often than not been humbug or bluff. I myself consider success a worthy object, and I admire ambition in the young. Furthermore I see no reason why the *petite bourgeoisie* should not have a share with the *haute bourgeoisie* in a predominantly middle-class society. What alarms me is the extension of this principle to the realm of aesthetics. I am thinking here of the idea that the middlebrow writer has an equal right to critical attention and respect with the highbrow writer. My own objection to some of the Angry Young Men is that they make precisely this claim, not that they express the bitterness of victims of social prejudice.

Mr Allsop does not explore this aspect of the problem at all adequately. Indeed he must be said to be guilty of one of the errors against which he sets out to warn us. He has had to look so hard to find what it is that the Angry Young Men have in common that he ends by writing as if this is what is most significant about each one of them severally. He thus fails to see that some of the people he mentions may have merits not *because* they are Angry Young Men, but *independently* of their being Angry Young Men. As a company the Angry Young Men have no more charm for me than they have for Mr Allsop; at 38—which is Mr Allsop's age, and my own—one is ill equipped to like them, since one is too old to share their feelings and too young to be paternally indulgent towards them. On the other hand, it seems to me that there are among the people Mr Allsop names several writers of authentic talent, which has nothing to do with their being polemicists: I think notably of Osborne, Wain and Holroyd, each of whom stands in a separate squad for Mr Allsop, but all of whom stand together for me in

possessing a measure of ability the other Angry Young Men lack.

I do not ask that Mr Allsop should have this same opinion. I only feel that he should have sought to justify his own opinion, that he should have made some effort to compare each of the writers he considers, not only in terms of *Weltanschauung*, but also in terms of literary qualities, even though this would amount in his case, since he thinks none of them much good, to no more than elucidation of their respective faults. The rational alternative would have been to write a purely sociological book, which would have had for its subject the condition, social and cultural, of Great Britain today, the Angry Young Men's market, not the Angry Young Men themselves. As it is, Mr Allsop has written what purports to be a literary book about something he does not believe to be a literary subject. His thesis being that the Angry Young Men are of little or no literary value but considerable sociological importance, the literary critic ought, logically, to yield to the sociologist. But Mr Allsop is not a sociologist, and what he gives us is neither criticism nor sociology, but journalism—journalism, moreover, of a painfully ill-written kind; he has produced a book which can only serve to enlarge the myth it is intended to diminish. The Angry Young Men Mr Allsop attacks may be forgiven if they find comfort in the thought with which a film producer tried to console the bereaved mother of James Dean: 'Well, ma'am, at any rate, it's good publicity.'

MAURICE CRANSTON

EXILE AND THE KINGDOM by Albert Camus. (*Hamish Hamilton. 13s. 6d.*)

TEN MILES FROM ANYWHERE by P. H. Newby. (*Jonathan Cape. 15s.*)

THE END OF PITY by Robie Macauley. (*Harrap. 15s.*)

THE LADY AND THE CUT-THROAT by Tom Hopkinson. (*Jonathan Cape. 15s.*)

There was a time when short stories tended to be either anecdotal or atmospheric—to follow the example of Maupassant via Somerset Maugham or that of Chekhov via Katherine Mansfield. It is now clear that the writing of Chekhov and Maupassant has more in common than that of Mansfield and Maugham, over-zealous disciples who each developed one aspect of their masters' art to a point where the limitations of the disciple (but not of the master) became defined. The modern short story attempts to bridge this artificial division by a fusion of techniques, combining when possible the contrived twist in the tail with the poetic slice of life. The results,

in many cases, are remarkably skilful and enjoyable; but their very assurance often precludes the quality of originality, and even when they escape the tailored *chic* of the New Yorker pattern they still run true to a form less rigid, but rigid none the less. (The self-conscious cultivation of originality usually leads to eccentricity—to the *faux naïf* of allegory or to an over-wrought gothic style, legacy of the surrealist experiment.) P. H. Newby, Robie Macauley and Tom Hopkinson differ widely from each other, yet after reading and enjoying their collections it is possible to confuse them, to place one story in the wrong volume; no such mistake, of course, could be made about their novels. And no such mistake can be made about the six stories in Albert Camus's *Exile and the Kingdom*. These are, in various degrees, anecdotal, atmospheric, poetic, contrived, allegorical and overwrought; but they cannot be pigeon-holed because before anything else they are *intellectual*, and intellectual stories, even in France, are quite amazingly rare. The fact that each story has a close connection with the author's serious thought distinguishes this volume from the work of other contemporary writers in the same field; one is so accustomed to admiring technique, that to have one's attention engaged by the *content* is an unusual experience. A lesser writer might not have survived the clumsy translation by Justin O'Brien; as it is, only two stories, 'The Renegade' and 'The Artist At Work', suffer from his literal, unmusical, American academic treatment. The first is an extraordinary *tour de force* about a missionary who joins a savage tribe in search of martyrdom and is exalted by the hideous tortures imposed on him; evil is made concrete by illustration, and in English—'O Fetish, my god over yonder, may your power be preserved, may the offence be multiplied, may hate rule pitilessly over a world of the damned, may the wicked forever be masters, may the kingdom come, where in a single city of salt and iron black tyrants will enslave and possess without pity!'—it occasionally approaches bathos, embarrassing one with echoes of Alastair Crowley. 'The Artist At Work' is marred by a heavy irony (the French aren't *necessarily* masters of the light touch) made heavier still by the translator's American facetiousness. Of the rest, 'The Guest', which has already appeared in *The London Magazine*, is a classic, 'The Adulterous Woman' contains the whole of Paul Bowles and more in a few pages, 'The Silent Men' describes a conflict between strikers and employer with beautiful subtlety, and 'The Growing Stone', besides depicting a town in the Brazilian jungle with miraculous clarity, is so packed with implications that several readings are necessary before they can be exhausted. It is possible that this story and 'The Guest' belong with the limited

number of short stories which transcend the brevity of the form and, occasionally appearing, keep the form alive.

In other company P. H. Newby's *Ten Miles From Anywhere* would be outstanding. He is a highly sensuous but economical writer; no words are wasted, yet sights, sounds and even smells are released for the reader without direct description. He is most himself when writing about the East—'Uncle Kevork', 'The Beginning Of Exile', 'Khamseen' and 'The China Tomato' are among the most successful stories in the book. When he chooses an English background he approaches it as if it were equally exotic; preciousness, the consciously poetic, is a danger then, but it is nearly always avoided. Nothing is taken for granted, everything (even in the light, comic stories) is seen with a sense of wonder; this is a rare quality in so sophisticated and versatile a writer. Essentially, his is a lyrical gift, but this strain is controlled by humour and a certain robustness which operates, as it were, behind the scenes.

The stories in Robie Macauley's *The End of Pity* are both more conventional in treatment and more substantial in theme. This is also an excellent collection. The first four, which deal with the American Occupational Forces in Europe, form the most important section; Mr Macauley could write a fascinating novel against this background. The American domestic scene has become a very familiar setting in fiction; 'The Wishbone', 'Windfall' and 'Legend Of The Two Swimmers', however, are superior examples. Two satirical stories set in an American University are the least satisfactory; these are funny, but superficial, almost slick, compared to the rest of the book. So accomplished a performance calls for all the reviewer's clichés: sensitive, intelligent, readable. Some new adjective, a superlative of the debased 'readable', which for some reason suggests faint praise, should be coined to describe this particular sort of book.

The Lady and the Cut-throat is Tom Hopkinson's first volume of stories for ten years; two are reprinted from *The Transitory Venus*. It is an uneven collection, as the list of acknowledgements to magazines, which range from *Housewife* to *Horizon*, suggests. The author says that the contents fall into two groups, about love and about business dealings, and a parallel between these themes is developed on the blurb. In fact, very few deal with business; this is a pity, as those that do are the best and also the most individual. The love stories are good as far as they go—sincere, observant, well written—but they don't go quite far enough; the point is often discernible from the beginning, and then gracefully but unnecessarily developed. As a whole, this book gives the impression of a good

writer short of material—an impression given only too often by arbitrary collections of stories written under various pressures for various journals.

FRANCIS WYNDHAM

THE SICILIAN VESPERS by Steven Runciman. (*Cambridge University Press. 27s. 6d.*)

FREDERICK II OF HOHENSTAUFEN by Georgina Masson. (*Secker & Warburg. 35s.*)

The Sicilian Vespers took place at Palermo on Easter Monday evening in 1282; the native population rose and killed as many of the occupying French as they could lay hands or knives on. Sir Steven Runciman points out that as massacres go the Vespers was relatively moderate, accounting for perhaps two thousand victims. This is nothing to the vast holocausts which marked the medieval invasions and conquests in the Middle East, or to the slaughter of eleven thousand at Thessalonica commanded by the Emperor Theodosius in a fit of temper, or to what recent dictators have organized. But the political significance and emotional impact of deeds of violence bears little relation to the numbers involved. Look at Glencoe or Peterloo.

The Sicilian Vespers did not, in the long run, prevent the servitude and exploitation of the Sicilians, or the gradual decay of the civilization they had created and sustained in the twelfth century. But the rising certainly altered the history of the Mediterranean, since it prevented the French ruler of Sicily, Charles of Anjou, from attacking the Byzantine Emperor, extending his power to Constantinople and reuniting the Eastern Church with the West. That is its real significance in the history of Europe, as Sir Steven Runciman shows with his customary mastery of essentials in a period of jungle politics.

The rising has other points of interest; it was not a sudden impetuous riot, but had been long planned and was the outcome of an international conspiracy among the opponents of Charles of Anjou who had seen to it that the Sicilians were armed. But if arms and organization came partly from the outside, the formidable power behind the revolt was native and genuine. The Vespers were inevitably written up as a patriotic nationalist rising in the nineteenth century, but they were in fact something very like it. The polyglot people of Sicily came of diverse origins and believed in different religions—Greek and Latin Christians, Muslims, and Jews—but under the able government of their Norman Kings in the twelfth century they had achieved national consciousness and a justifiable

pride in the quality of their civilization. Steven Runciman describes this well, though necessarily briefly. To anyone wanting to know more of the Sicilian twelfth century I would recommend that recent remarkable monograph, *Admiral Eugenius of Sicily* by Evelyn Jamison.

Although it is evident that the Sicilian rising against the French was the outcome of a genuine and nation-wide desire to be rid of foreign domination, disappointingly little is known or can be discovered about this. What was the character of the resistance organization without which so extensive, sudden and well-organized a rising could not have happened? We can only conjecture. Sir Steven is aware of this gap which modern research cannot fill, but he compensates for it by the assurance and perception of his picture of European politics, and the easy, accurate charm of his character-drawing.

European history from the eleventh to the thirteenth century was dominated by the struggle between succeeding Emperors and succeeding Popes; in theory they were the spiritual and temporal arms of the same universal state, in practice they were constantly at loggerheads. They could hardly help it; each was more or less bound by the exigencies of his position to strive for mastery over the other. Equal co-operation between two partner authorities rarely, if ever, works effectively in politics. The struggle was regularly marked by furious descents of the Emperors over the Alps into Italy, but the Mediterranean was in reality the key, for a ruler who could draw on the power and riches of the Mediterranean basin would have no difficulty in mastering the Pope.

The possession, or the friendship, of Sicily was therefore vital. Under its Norman rulers it had been usually on the Papal side. But Constance, the last heiress of the line, married the Hohenstaufen Emperor, Henry VI, so that her extraordinary son, Frederick II, became both Emperor and King of Sicily, and for this, as well as other reasons, Antichrist in the eyes of the Pope and his supporters.

It was after his death that Charles of Anjou, the ambitious, able, utterly unsympathetic brother of that shining Christian knight Saint Louis, came forward as the Papal answer to the Hohenstaufen menace. He made good his power in Southern Italy and Sicily by defeating and killing in battle Manfred, the glamorous bastard of Frederick II, who was later to hold moving converse with Dante on the mountainside of Purgatory (Characters from *The Divine Comedy* abound throughout the book.). Later, Charles of Anjou shocked the code even of the pitiless thirteenth century by beheading the beautiful sixteen-year-old Conradin, the last prince of the Hohen-

staufen line, who had the misfortune to become his prisoner-of-war. He was considering the further expansion of his Mediterranean power when the Sicilian Vespers checked his advance and set him on the slippery path of decline. Given his tenacity, his ability and his ambitious political vision he might otherwise have built the Mediterranean empire of which he dreamed. What its outcome would have been, and what its effect on the delicate equilibrium of his relations with the Pope, it is impossible to guess.

This is the story which Sir Steven Runciman tells with a fluent mastery which makes even its exceptionally complex and bloody politics seem easy (which they are not) and fascinating (which they are). Once again in this book, as in his more leisurely and massive *Crusades* he is quietly and effectively working against the insular and Nordic view of European history, which sees the Channel as the centre, over-emphasizes Anglo-French and Anglo-German relations, and puts the Mediterranean as the southern limit. To understand medieval Europe it is essential to grasp the central position of the Mediterranean in the pattern of political action.

The Emperor Frederick II, *Stupor Mundi*, makes a necessarily brief appearance in *The Sicilian Vespers*, though he can hardly cross any page of history without lighting it up. This extraordinary man, statesman, administrator, warrior and poet, recklessly gifted and recklessly unconventional in thought and action, a passionate huntsman, an equally passionate enquirer into the mysteries of science, astronomy and astrology, stands out as one of the few political figures of any age to whom the word 'genius' can be unhesitatingly applied. Miss Georgina Masson has written a straightforward biography with a particularly interesting chapter on his exploits as a builder of castles. She does not, otherwise, bring anything very new to her account, and she has not the insight and power of Ernst Kantorowicz—the English translation of whose masterly biography has recently been re-issued. But she has studied the sources with care and presented the facts clearly; she handles character sympathetically and does full justice to the arts and sciences which Frederick both patronized and practised. It would need a writer who combined the qualities of poet, scientist, historian and visionary to recapture in all their varying aspects the towering spirit and tireless achievements of Frederick. He emerges from the sordid intrigues, rivalries, wars and vengeance of thirteenth century Europe as a solitary eccentric giant, and the Popes who opposed and thwarted him, though at least two of them were very remarkable men, seem small by comparison. Miss Masson cannot quite do justice to the overwhelming personality of the Emperor, but she

has made a valiant attempt. Her book presents the outward man, and the events of his political life, with an attractive enthusiasm, and if she leaves the ultimate mysteries of his character unsolved, so, to a greater or lesser degree, have all his other biographers.

C. V. WEDGWOOD

THE PLAYS OF EUGENE IONESCO. (*Calder. Two Vols, 18s. each*)

FLOWERING CHERRY by Robert Bolt. (*Heinemann. 10s. 6d.*)

In a lecture he gave at the French Institute in London some months ago, Eugène Ionesco said: 'A play cannot be explained or demonstrated, it must be acted. It is not a lecture but a piece of living evidence. If it fails to be this, it fails to be a play.' Fair enough: and it is certainly true that M. Ionesco's plays, because of the nature of the effects they rely on, come completely to life only in the theatre. This, to me, is precisely as it should be, and I cannot agree with the kind of critic who says that a play must be judged simply by a reading of its text. After all, the playwright's words are meant to be spoken just as the composer's notes are meant to be played, and I should not care to pass judgement on, say, a group of masterpieces like the Bartok string quartets, purely on a study of their published scores.

Take, for instance, *The Chairs*, which in performance is one of Ionesco's most successful plays. So much of this success depends upon a series of visual jokes—the stage filling crazily with chairs, the frenzied ringings of the doorbell and the mounting excitement of the old couple as the invisible guests arrive. This is Ionesco's technique at its purest, something that can happen only in a theatre. We believe it because it is in fact taking place before our eyes. On the printed page, all this is indicated in stage directions, but it is a plan of action only; it lacks the immediacy of the theatre.

In the address quoted above, Ionesco goes on to say that 'the writer with a thesis alienates the freedom of his characters. He tries to mould them to his own ideals, and in so doing makes them appear false.' It is difficult, however, to believe that Ionesco himself has not started from a thesis, since many of his plays seem to be illustrations of the same point: that the language has failed us, or we have failed the language. That communication on any deep and real level between two human beings is all but impossible. That we have somewhere lost the ability to express ourselves frankly and directly. Poetry is too exact for today's tentative communion, so we take refuge behind words used aimlessly, carelessly and flabbily. Is this linguistic evasion symptomatic of something deeper? Ionesco plays

with the idea in *The Bald Prima Donna*, preaches a macabre and comic sermon on the same text in *The Lesson*, and in the *dénouement* of *The Chairs* presents us with Truth as a tale told by an idiot . . . signifying nothing. And this Truth, this Nothing, which emerges from the lips of the 'orator' hired to announce it, is hurled at us by Ionesco with the finality and the passion of one who would rather believe in nothing than not believe in anything. But the orator is a deaf-mute, the noises he emits—the truth he tells—are moans and guttural strivings towards speech. The invisible audience laughs derisively, the curtain falls, and we, I suppose, leave the theatre seeking to rediscover our own belief, our own truth, and to hold on to it, at least through our waking hours.

The theme is varied somewhat in *The New Tenant*, a short play which illustrates, in the style of an intellectual comic-strip, the human being constructing his own predicament, building his aloneness. Here again, on the stage, the comic effect is immense. The furniture movers continue to pile furniture into the room until the new tenant is, by his own directions, completely immured. The hushed casket of his soul has been sealed in the modern manner. The symbolism is not complex, and it is easy to see the furniture as the *idées fixes* with which we clutter up our lives, the prejudices behind which we hide and live in secret. One laughs at it in the theatre, and admits it in the interval: the world is made of walls.

Perhaps the most ambitious, certainly the only full-length play in these two volumes is *Amédée* or *How to get rid of it*, which began life as a short story (published in translation in *The London Magazine* as *The Dislodger*). A married couple share their apartment with a corpse. He has been with them for ten or fifteen years, and annoys and embarrasses them by growing bigger and bigger till he fills the entire flat. In the story, he seems quite definitely to have been a young man who had once called, and had begun to make love to the wife during the husband's absence for five minutes. The husband had returned, killed him in a jealous rage, and had been meaning ever since to report the matter to the police, but somehow hadn't got round to it. In the play the husband is an author, and for some years he hasn't got round to finishing his masterpiece either. In fact he's written only one line of it. And in the play we are not so sure of the identity of the corpse. It was all so long ago, it *may* have been the handsome young man who called at the apartment, but then it may also have been a baby that a neighbour had once asked them to look after for a few hours—or it could be someone else again. *Amédée* cannot remember clearly.

Perhaps from *Amédée's* point of view it doesn't matter *who* the

corpse was, but we cannot help wondering just what it was. Was it, when it was alive, Amédée's creative ability, as one English critic suggested when the play was produced in Cambridge? Or was it, as it appears to me from reading the text, the love of Amédée for his wife Madeleine? Both these states of being are dead by the time the play begins, and though Amédée's creative genius merely stagnates, the corpse of his love is steadily growing, nurtured by his exasperating inability to make a practical move of any kind, and her insensitivity to his mental anguish. Did he ever commit a murder? It doesn't matter. Raskolnikov may have actually had to kill in order not to be innocent, but we live in different times. Amédée is quite capable of having the guilt without the crime. In his depressive state, he grieves for a past that failed to happen, and despairs of a future he cannot envisage; while his wife nags and worries and threatens in an attempt to make him act, to rid them of the body which is becoming a nuisance.

The last act of the play, when the action moves outside the apartment, with Amédée dragging the body across a public square, is almost impossible to stage, and goes to pieces in any case. The claustrophobic horror of the corpse in the apartment is lost, and we feel we've been cheated of a solution or at least a resolving of the situation. M. Ionesco has not followed his premise to any conclusion, logical or otherwise. But sustained thought, even sustained imagery, these are not his strong points. The shorter, single-minded plays are perfectly realized. *Amédée* may be a distinguished failure, but behind the comic *non-sequiturs* in *The Chairs*, *The Bald Prima Donna* and *The Lesson*, we can glimpse a mind at work that is contemporary, nervous and sincere.

Most of us know we are treading on dangerous ground when we attempt to live one life and dream another. The hero of Mr Bolt's play, *Flowering Cherry*, does not know it. He sells insurance and lives in a London suburb with his wife and two children, but his inner dream-life which is set in farmland and orchard in Somerset, has gradually taken over. Human kind cannot bear very much reality, Mr Eliot once said, and reality for Jim Cherry has meant only inadequacy and failure. So his nostalgia for that life on the farm he knew as a child has soured into a neurotic escape from commitment and responsibility, a pipe-dream like those in Eugene O'Neill's *The Iceman Cometh*. His instability can be seen breaking out in the children: the evasiveness of the girl, the petty thieving of the boy. His home is kept together only by his level-headed and long-suffering wife.

Many aspects of *Flowering Cherry* lean rather heavily on Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, but Mr Bolt's gift for dialogue is very much his own. Perhaps it hasn't the edge that John Osborne would give to the speech of similar characters, but it is more firmly based. It belongs. And where Arthur Miller wrote as a sociologist-playwright, Mr Bolt is rather the psychiatrist-playwright. He seeks first the desert within, and comes some way towards finding it. A great pity therefore that his nerve or his instinct failed, and that at the end his play goes down the drain in a melodramatic gurgle, for so much of it is acutely observed, and it has something to say that is of and for our time. The English theatre sorely needs dramatists, and there is still hope that Mr Bolt may prove to be a very fine one.

CHARLES OSBORNE

JACQUES RIVIÈRE by Bradford Cook. (*Blackwell*. 25s.)

JEAN GIRAUDOUX by Donald Inskip. (*Oxford*. 18s.)

Faced with two books like these, one casts around for what they have in common. The authors are one a South African (Prof Inskip), the other an American, both academics. Publishing such books gives them a subject, ought to improve their standing in the profession. Prof Inskip may even make a little money. As to the writers discussed, Rivière's dates were 1886-1925, Giraudoux's 1882-1944. Both were insiders. Rivière was inside the *Nouvelle Revue Française* and the Church. Giraudoux was inside the Civil Service and the Theatre, as well as being a successful novelist. A figure in both their lives was Jacques Copeau, Rivière's predecessor at the NRF and founder of the *Vieux Colombier* theatre. That ought to get one through in a General Knowledge Quiz. I regretfully doubt whether foreigners other than the professional Francophile need to know more, though perhaps for a year or two conversational gambits may be based on the titles of plays by Giraudoux.

Rivière wrote little but literary criticism, religious self-explanation and letters. Of his voluminous correspondence, the best known is that with Alain-Fournier, author of *Le grand Meaulnes*, his school friend and, later, brother-in-law. A great deal of this was about Claudel. There is also a volume of correspondence between him and Claudel. He was in on the once-so-famous and now-oh-my-goodness-how-boring Claudel-Gide fuss. Everybody liked him, even Gide, who also found him faintly irritating. His co-religionists attributed to him a special brand of sincerity (he had written a thing called *De la Sincérité envers soi-même*). In the pretty little Bowes & Bowes series, there is a short monograph on him by G. M. Turnell. That

seems to be all in English. It may be all that is needed. Rivière was an attractive but, in terms of personal literary achievement, dim figure. There are kinds of French literary involvement which don't travel.

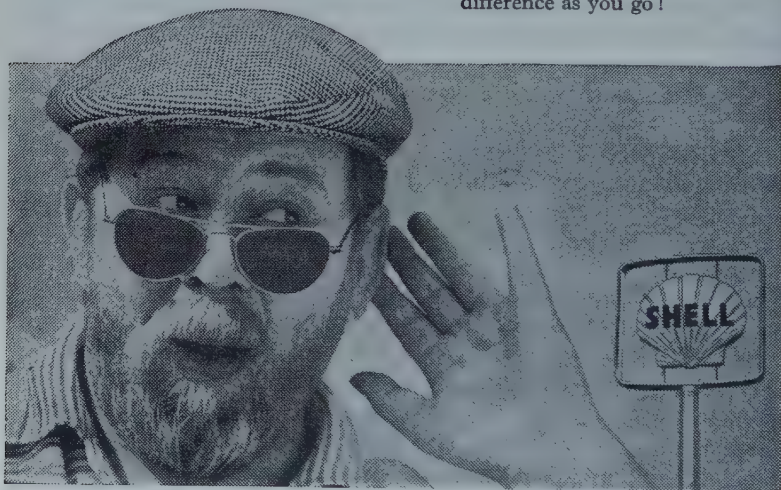
Whatever doubts there may be about how well he is keeping, Giraudoux has travelled, if only because we like French films and the occasional visits of French theatrical companies and can always find an audience for anything translated by Mr Fry. Giraudoux has even exerted an influence, for I take it we must hold him mainly responsible for the kind of playwrights' codding of Greek mythology which Mr Levy has exemplified with great recent success in *The Rape of the Belt*. Giraudoux's essays in this *genre* seem to be the only plays by him in English translation on this side of the Atlantic. *Amphitryon* '38 was one of our film delights before the war. A little later, one might have heard M. Giraudoux over the wireless, broadcasting the rhetoric of French official patriotism to French troops involved in the *Sitzkrieg*. In Prof Inskip's book, there is a photograph of him doing it, one of those thin-lipped, bespectacled French faces, expostulating.

Both in Rivière's and in Giraudoux's case, the situations to which they were insiderly do France credit. It is to Rivière's own that he was able to maintain a perfect religious seriousness, to combine it with critical writing at a high non-doctrinaire level and to be at the same time a first-rate managerial editor. It was to the credit of unbelievers like Gide that they respected and could work with him. But the situation itself is difficult to imagine outside France. *The Criterion* is our closest parallel here, but the scale was smaller. Mr Eliot *could* indulge himself, did not have to battle and arbitrate in quite the same high-powered way. *The Adelphi* soon narrowed down to a small group, though in its early days it had *NRF* circulation.

Mr Eliot is also the exception which proves a rule about the Paris and London theatrical worlds. He has enjoyed theatrical success on a massive scale. During the present century, he is the only writer of much previous note to do so in this country (unless we are to regard Dublin as part of this country in Yeats's time). Our only exceptions on a more modest scale seem to be Mr Maugham, Mr Priestley, the late Charles Morgan and Mr Greene. There was also John Galsworthy, equally playwright and novelist. The list is not unimpressive, and yet I feel it to be largely and characteristically true that the playwright here is a serviceable sub-literary figure, wholly *sui generis*. The greater literacy of the French theatre is partly due to the example of a few men like Copeau, Charles Dullin and (Giraudoux's own champion) Louis Jouvet, though we may perhaps

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also credit the French educational system with less tendency to separate the smart from the brainy. It is, at any rate, normal for good French novelists and poets to write plays and get them put on and have them acclaimed. Little theatres in Paris are not insulated from the commercial circuit. Moreover, not only have most French actors received a better general education, but acting itself in France calls for a more intelligent, more technical attitude to the job.

There was not much similarity between Giraudoux's plays and his novels. Prof Inskip is not much concerned with the novels. His sub-title is 'The Making of a Dramatist'. He gossips a little about the novels as a biographical episode, reminding us that the figure of 'Rebendart' in *Bella* was supposed to be a satirical portrait of Poincaré. For my own part, I admit the force of Sartre's brilliant pre-war essay on the latent Aristotelianism of Giraudoux's narrative style (where nothing is truly concrete, but simply an essence exemplified) and yet find that I recall *Bella* and *Églantine* more distinctly and with greater pleasure than any of the plays I have seen, heard or read (not, I fear, the lot, by any means). No doubt this is eccentric, and possibly both these writers amount to more than the two not-very-exciting books about them have left me willing to admit.

RAYNER HEPPENSTALL

THE EPIC STRAIN IN THE ENGLISH NOVEL by E. M. W. Tillyard. (*Chatto & Windus. 21s.*)

At the beginning of his *English Epic* Professor Tillyard told us that in his investigations he 'soon inclined to include certain novels among the epics'. In the present book he applies himself to this outgrowth of his original subject. It is a much shorter book than his previous one, because, even when he extends his terms to include novels that present an 'epic area' of experience while failing to pass his other tests, there are still very few of them, no more than *Robinson Crusoe*, a group of Scott's earlier novels with *Waverley* at their head, *Nostromo* and *The Old Wives' Tale*. Other claimants come up for judgement and are dismissed; neither *Tom Jones* nor *Ulysses* can be admitted, whatever their authors say. Epics have always been rare, and it is the nature, not the brevity, of the list that surprises. The criteria of the epic, as Professor Tillyard works them out, are related to his plea for the rehabilitation of the doctrine of literary kinds. He is not willing that the whole conception of the kind and its requirements shall disappear from criticism, since 'right classification puts the mind in a right direction and reduces the danger of a wrong one'; but he sees that it can no longer stand upon a



*Corinthian, Doric, and Ionic
Leave some ecstatic, some laconic;
Likewise Rococo and Baroque
Give some a thrill, and some a shock.
But all admire the style of fascia
Presented by this Guinness glass here:
They laud its classic lines at length,
Marking its beauty – and its strength.*



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largely formal basis. To be acceptable now it must be established upon the persistent habits and qualities of the human mind. We celebrate the dead and attack our enemies, and elegy and satire are permanent kinds of expression. The novel itself is not a kind. It 'includes within its compass a regular mob of literary entities'. No likeness useful for criticism links *Tristram Shandy* and *The Sign of Four*, and we should teach ourselves to think of tragedy, comedy and satire in the form of prose fiction. What then of epic? What links *Robinson Crusoe* to *Nostromo* and *Waverley* to *The Old Wives' Tale* and makes them all candidates for the epic class, and comparable on that basis with the *Iliad* and *Paradise Lost*? Ignoring Professor Tillyard's saving clauses, and the qualification of unconsciousness in author and audience which attends his definitions like a shadow, we may say that the principal mark of the epic in prose fiction is its choric quality, through which the novelist expresses the character and metaphysic of his time. In addition, he should present the life of his society on a sufficiently large scale to win acceptance as its mouthpiece, and with a sufficient mastery of form and organization to evince in his art the exercise of what Professor Tillyard calls the heroic will.

This is a specialist's proposal for an improved technique in criticism. It makes a certain appeal by its logic and symmetry. How satisfactory if epic could be added to the permanent literary kinds, if the sparse, august lineage, instead of expiring with Pope's *Homer*, could be held to throw up scions on the Border and in the Potteries, if we could feel that *Paradise Lost* belonged to as living a kind as *Othello*! It is not so easy to decide in the abstract on the validity of the plea. Its acceptance must depend on the success of the operations performed by the newly-sharpened instrument. Are our eyes indeed couched? Certainly, Professor Tillyard brings out features in his chosen writers that have the air of novelty. It is interesting to compare the ethos of Puritanism in the ascendant in *Robinson Crusoe* with that of its decline in *The Old Wives' Tale*, and to see the background of *Nostromo* dissected in depth until we discern the nerves of European politics threaded through Conrad's imaginary state. Moreover, his requirement of masterly form leads him to detect a degree of organization in the fiction of Defoe and Scott not usually recognized. Yet this might have been done without reference to the literary kinds. No such astigmatism affects the reader who approaches Defoe or Conrad without these guides as distorts the vision of one who demands of Fielding a kind of moral intensity inappropriate to classical comedy.

Professor Tillyard's reassessment of Scott, however, is conducted

in close relation with his theory. Who now reads Scott? Perhaps only those who have attained the time of life when the greatest pleasure in reading is the companionship of a congenial mind, to whom all his clearly-seen faults are forgiven. Professor Tillyard admits the faults—they prevent him claiming full rank as an epic novelist for Scott—but bids us read him without standardized expectations and be prepared for anything. We should not gallop through good and bad alike, but pause to discriminate the fine irony of Flora MacIvor, and the perfect keeping of her brother's farewell. What makes him extend his lines, however, to take Scott in, and indeed devote the longest section in his book to him, is his function as the mouthpiece of a society, growing in power and prosperity, and requiring the reconciliation of the opposing forces within it, and outside. When the cousins, Rob Roy and Bailie Nicol Jarvie, do each other good offices, they symbolize the reconciliation of the heroic virtues of barbaric life with the spirit of commercial enterprise. In *Waverley*, Jacobite and Hanoverian and Scot and Englishman are presented to each other; and this process of reconciliation, whether consciously undertaken or not, is the activity of an epic writer. So far, so good. But Professor Tillyard walks rather carefully round *Guy Mannering*, where the opposing forces are the lawless and the enforcers of law, and reconciliation hardly covers the case. He has here to develop another line, the problem of adjusting ancient customs to the changing times, urgent for Scotland in the eighteenth century as for us now. It is not to deny the inclusion of Scott in the epic class of novelists, or indeed the existence of that class itself, to maintain that the 'unconscious metaphysic' of his novels—and it inspires slighter work like *Woodstock* and *The Talisman*, as well as the novels that grew from national roots and are his best—concerns not only seventeenth and eighteenth century Scotland, but civilized man. He has a vision of history that is much more than the varied pageant to which it has been reduced, and extends beyond the local and temporary reconciliations to which he lent his genius with goodwill. All through history he sees men drawing off into hostile ranks and spending their lives and spirits in opposing causes, while Cuddie Headrigg and his kind try to sow and reap their fields and bring up their children between the advances of the armies. This too is an epic theme of permanent import and universal reference. In his attempt to give Scott another chance, Professor Tillyard forges against wind and tide; but winds change in time and the tide turns, and fashions in literature are more mutable than the work of genius, however faulty.

J. M. S. TOMPKINS

James Stern writes:

I think it only fair to the author of *Voss* and to your readers to quote a passage in a letter from Patrick White concerning my essay on his work in your June issue:

'Incidentally, there are one or two mistakes in your essay on the books! The sparring match between Voss and Laura took place, not during a ball, but at Mrs Bonner's dinner party. *Judd did not witness the death of Voss*. The only member of the expedition to do so was Jackie, the murderer. Judd, when he is questioned at the unveiling of the memorial, suggests that he was present at the end of Voss, whereas he describes the death of Palfreyman—with the spear sticking out of his side—of which he was a witness. In his old age, or second childhood, the convict cannot sort out his memories, and even attributes to Voss some of the characteristics of Palfreyman, which, after all, was not so far from the truth, for Voss, in his less guarded moments, did reveal some of the characteristics of a better man.'

THE NEXT NUMBER

The London Magazine

Vol. 5, Number 9, will be out in mid-August and
will contain among other contributions

Joyce Cary : *A Hero of Our Time*

Gavin Lambert : *The Countess*

Colin Wilson : *Existential Criticism and the Work of Aldous Huxley*

Anthony Quinton on *American Fiction*

Notes About Our Authors

HENRI THOMAS is considered one of the most interesting contemporary French writers. He has published novels, short stories, poems and translations. One of his best-known books is *La Nuit de Londres*. He has also translated Shakespeare, Blake, Melville and Robert Frost. In 1956 he was awarded the Prix Saint-Beuve for his collection of short stories *La Cible*.

PIER PAOLO PASOLINI is in his mid-thirties. He spent much of his childhood in the Friuli district of Northern Italy, and his first important collection of poems, *La Meglio Gioventù*, was in Friulan dialect. More recently he has published a prize-winning novel *Ragazzi di Vita*, set in Rome where he now lives.

GEORGE MOORSE is an American, aged 21. His poems have appeared in *Poetry*, *The Beloit Poetry Journal*, *Embryo* and *Zero Anthology*. He also writes essays on jazz.

OWEN LEEMING is 28. Until four years ago, he lived in Christchurch, New Zealand, where he graduated at Canterbury University College. Since that time he has studied musical composition in Paris, and he now works in London as a radio producer. He has broadcast in the Third Programme and has contributed to *The Listener*.

MALCOLM BRADBURY is 25. He holds an M.A. in English from London University. He is now working on a book on Twentieth Century English literary periodicals, and has begun research in the American Studies Department of Manchester University. He is just completing a first novel. His article on *The Criterion* appeared in *The London Magazine* Vol 5 No 2.

CHARLES OSBORNE, born in Brisbane in 1927, has contributed poetry and criticism to Australian magazines. He is the author of two plays, and also writes and broadcasts on music.

DR J. M. S. TOMPKINS is Reader in English Literature at London University. She has published an authoritative study of the Popular Novel in England in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, and has often contributed to *The Review of English Studies*.